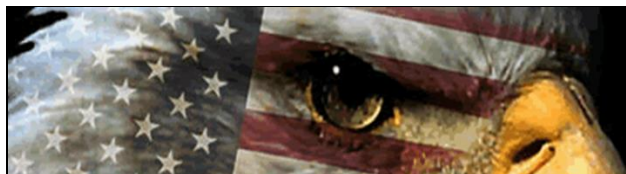



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	10/13 Russia: Ukraine in NATO leads to WWII
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/admission-ukraine-nato-can-lead-third-world-war-russian-official-2022-10-13/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/admission-ukraine-nato-can-lead-third-world-war-russian-official-2022-10-13/</a>

GIST	<p>LONDON, Oct 13 (Reuters) - If Ukraine is admitted into the U.S.-led NATO military alliance, then the conflict in Ukraine would be guaranteed to escalate into World War Three, a Russian Security Council official was quoted as saying on Thursday.</p> <p>Just hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin formally proclaimed the annexation of up to 18% of Ukraine on Sept. 30, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy announced a surprise bid for fast-track membership of NATO.</p> <p>Full NATO membership for Ukraine is far off because all the alliance's 30 members would have to give their consent.</p> <p>"Kyiv is well aware that such a step would mean a guaranteed escalation to World War Three," TASS quoted Alexander Venediktov, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, as saying.</p> <p>Venediktov, who is deputy to Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, a powerful Putin ally, said he felt Ukraine's application was propaganda as the West understood the consequences of Ukrainian membership of NATO.</p> <p>"The suicidal nature of such a step is understood by NATO members themselves," he said.</p> <p>President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly railed against the United States for driving NATO's eastward expansion, especially its courting of ex-Soviet republics such as Ukraine and Georgia which Russia regards as part of its own sphere of influence.</p> <p>Putin on Sept. 21 warned the West he was not bluffing when he said he would be ready to use nuclear weapons to defend Russia against what he said was "nuclear blackmail" from major Western powers.</p> <p>U.S. President Joe Biden has said the world faces the biggest risk of nuclear Armageddon since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. NATO is due to hold an annual nuclear preparedness exercise dubbed "Steadfast Noon" next week.</p> <p>Russia and the United States are by far the biggest nuclear powers: they control about 90% of the world's nuclear warheads.</p> <p>Venediktov said Zelenskiy's call for preventive strikes against Russia was dangerous, cautioning that nuclear war would have catastrophic consequences for the world.</p> <p>"We must remember: a nuclear conflict will affect absolutely the whole world — not only Russia and the collective West, but every country on this planet," Venediktov said. "The consequences would be disastrous for all mankind."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 US: Iran nuclear deal 'not focus right now'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/israel-tehran-nuclear/2022/10/12/id/1091620/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/israel-tehran-nuclear/2022/10/12/id/1091620/</a>
GIST	<p>The United States on Wednesday said that reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal is "not our focus right now," saying that Tehran has shown little interest in reviving the pact and that Washington was concentrating on how to support Iranian protesters instead.</p> <p>Asked if the United States was interested in pursuing talks to revive the pact under which Iran curbed its nuclear program in return for economic sanctions relief, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price replied "that's not our focus right now."</p> <p>"It is very clear and the Iranians have made very clear that this is not a deal that they have been prepared to make. The deal certainly does not appear imminent," Price told a briefing.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>"Nothing we've heard in recent weeks suggests they have changed their position. And so right now our focus ... is on the remarkable bravery and courage that the Iranian people are exhibiting through their peaceful demonstrations," he said.</p> <p>"Our focus right now is on shining a spotlight on what they're doing and supporting them in the ways we can," he said, referring to anti-government protests ignited by the Sept. 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Iran's morality police.</p> <p>Then-U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal between Iran and six major powers in 2018 and unilaterally reimposed economic sanctions that have hobbled Iran's economy by curbing its oil exports.</p> <p>A year later, Tehran reacted by gradually violating the deal's nuclear limits, reviving U.S., Israeli and Gulf Arab fears that Iran may be seeking to obtain an atomic weapon, an ambition Iran denies.</p> <p>The Biden administration has been under fire amid a stream of reports suggesting it was working toward a reinstatement of the deal nullified by Trump.</p> <p>"Iran understands one thing: power," Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, among critics of a revived deal, told Newsmax recently. "And a nuclear Iran shouldn't be accessible."</p> <p>Ally Israel has also been a vocal critic of Biden administration efforts to revive a nuclear agreement with Tehran because of deep concerns about how it might impact Israeli security.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/12 Airline tickets to cost 20% more this year
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/airline-tickets-travel/2022/10/12/id/1091622/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/airline-tickets-travel/2022/10/12/id/1091622/</a>
GIST	<p>Airline tickets will cost nearly 20% more this year, with the average domestic round-trip ticket estimated to be \$274, according to travel site Hopper.</p> <p>"Flight prices are at an all-time high. We haven't seen flights this expensive in five years. So if you haven't booked your holiday flights, now is the time to do it," travel expert Sandra McLemore told NewsNation Tuesday.</p> <p>"I do think that we're not going to see any relief for 2022, and perhaps into 2023. So it's no surprise that travelers are looking for alternative ways to spend their holidays and to travel."</p> <p>Cruises are a great option, she added.</p> <p>"It's not a surprise that all-inclusive travel styles, like cruising, like all-inclusive resorts, are really a great option for the holiday season," she said. "That's fully inclusive of where they're going to sleep, entertainment, food and, in some cases, there are some great deals like Wi-Fi and drink packages as well."</p> <p>The airline industry, which is facing higher fuel and wage bills, has been relying on robust demand to mitigate inflationary pressure with higher fares.</p> <p>Airline fares were up 33% year-on-year in August and have been one of the biggest contributors to a jump in U.S. consumer prices.</p> <p>With the Federal Reserve aggressively raising interest rates to tame inflation by lowering demand and slowing economic growth, the industry's pricing power is under threat.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/12 NYC homeless shelter population hits high
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SOURCE	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/nyc-homeless-shelter-population-hits-020900762.html">https://news.yahoo.com/nyc-homeless-shelter-population-hits-020900762.html</a>
GIST	<p>NEW YORK — The city’s homeless shelter population has hit an all-time high as hundreds of Latin American migrants continue to pour into New York every week as part of a crisis that’s driving the local social safety net to the brink of collapse.</p> <p>The previous record — 61,415 individuals in city shelters on Jan. 12, 2019 — was first cracked over the weekend, data from the Department of Homeless Services show. On Monday, the latest day for which data is available, the tally reached 62,174.</p> <p>In addition to setting a new population record, the average length of stay has also surged to all-time highs, with single adults now spending an average of 509 days in shelters, according to city data. Families with kids are, on average, in a shelter even longer — 534 days — and adult families spend an astonishing 855 days in shelters on average, the data shows.</p> <p>Mayor Adams’ administration has pinned the shelter chaos on an enormous influx of migrants into the city since this spring.</p> <p>As of this Monday, more than 19,000 Central and South American asylum seekers fleeing violence and economic devastation in their home countries had cycled through the city homeless shelter intake system, according to data from Adams’ office. A majority of them remain in shelters, and more migrants are being sent to the city every day after crossing into the U.S. from Mexico.</p> <p>The administration has scrambled to accommodate the migrants, and is in the process of building a controversial tent camp on Randalls Island to house some. City Council members have lambasted the tent plan as inhumane, and urged Adams to house migrants in vacant hotels instead.</p> <p>On that note, Adams announced in a Wednesday afternoon statement that the city is opening an emergency relief center for asylum seeking families with children at the upscale Row Hotel in Midtown. It will initially have capacity to house 200 families, who will get access to food, medical care and case work services.</p> <p>Despite having been at the forefront of calling for migrants to be housed in hotels, Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, D-Queens, said she was given no heads up on the latest emergency facility announcement, signaling brewing tensions between the Council and the mayor’s team.</p> <p>“I was not privy to this information,” she told reporters at City Hall. “It’s never ok when you get no notice. But given the situation that we’re in now — the crisis that we’re in now — we certainly understand that things happen.”</p> <p>Many migrants in New York were sent to the city by Republican governors, including Texas’ Greg Abbott, as part of a political stunt aimed at criticizing Democratic immigration policies.</p> <p>The Daily News spotted roughly 60 Venezuelan migrants being dropped off Wednesday morning at the 30th Street intake center in Manhattan — the same location where dozens of people were forced to sleep on floors and benches last month in apparent violation of the right-to-shelter law after the city failed to provide beds for them in a timely manner.</p> <p>The migrants included teenagers, and several wore clothing emblazoned with the words “Save the Children,” a humanitarian organization that helps asylum seekers with accessing services.</p> <p>While the migrant crisis is undoubtedly straining the shelter system, the Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless said some dysfunction can be attributed to “bureaucratic bottlenecks” at city agencies and a drastic slowdown in affordable housing production.</p> <p>Adams, the advocacy groups said, has not done enough to address the matter.</p>

	<p>“Mayor Adams must commit to financing at least 6,000 apartments per year for homeless households and 6,000 apartments per year for households with extremely low incomes. We have urged the administration to take these necessary steps for months,” the groups said in a statement. “Should the city fail to act, the shelter census will only continue to rise even higher and more people will needlessly suffer homelessness.”</p> <p>In his Wednesday announcement, Adams also affirmed that the tent city on Randalls will “soon” open, and added that his administration is looking into building several more similar facilities in the city.</p> <p>The mayor has pushed back against criticism over his tent plans by accusing Council members of publicly voicing support for the migrants, but privately expressing reservations about housing them in their districts.</p> <p>“Some of the loudest that are saying we need to make sure we house asylum seekers have been some of the loudest of saying not on our block,” he said Tuesday before predicting that “every community is going to see asylum seekers” if the crisis continues at its current pace. He declined to name the Council members whose views he’s taking issue with.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Rising rates, debt: taxpayer bill coming due</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/with-rising-rates-and-rising-debt-the-taxpayer-bill-is-finally-coming-due/ar-AA12UNbd">https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/with-rising-rates-and-rising-debt-the-taxpayer-bill-is-finally-coming-due/ar-AA12UNbd</a>
GIST	<p>This period of economic expansion, enhanced by trillions of federal dollars spent to stave off a covid-caused economic crisis, has created millions of jobs. But it’s also led to tremendous inflation.</p> <p>The bill is now coming due. The aftershocks of this moment will cost the government — which is to say, taxpayers — enormously in the form of higher interest payments. How much more? Total interest payments on the government’s debt could come in at nearly \$580 billion this fiscal year, up from \$399 billion in recently-completed fiscal 2022.</p> <p>That would bring the total interest cost in 2023 to roughly the same level as the federal government’s 2022 <a href="#">budget for Medicaid</a>.</p> <p>The increase is caused partly by the U.S. government’s rapidly increasing national debt, as well as by the Federal Reserve sharply increasing interest rates to hold down inflation. The government has more than \$31 trillion in debt and ran a \$1.4 trillion deficit in fiscal 2022 (a figure that represents the gap between spending and revenue).</p> <p>These high interest costs in the current fiscal year are just the beginning. Those costs will continue growing rapidly, which will increase the burden for future generations.</p> <p>The Congressional Budget Office’s interest-cost projections, issued in May, predicted a rise of \$43 billion in interest costs for fiscal year 2023 compared with 2022. Fiscal year 2023 began on Oct. 1.</p> <p>But after adjusting for the sharply higher interest rates that the Federal Reserve has imposed since May — and assuming that the Fed will keep its word and impose additional increases later this year — the interest-cost numbers are staggering.</p> <p>With help from Marc Goldstein, the senior policy director of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, I’ve used a workbook function on the CBO’s website to estimate the added cost of interest rates higher than the CBO projected in May.</p> <p>The 30-day Treasury interest rate this week was more than 2.5 percent higher than on May 2, the one-year rate was more than 2 percent higher, and the 10-year rate was almost 1 percent higher. And the Fed says that higher rates are coming later this year.</p>

	<p>Let's assume the Treasury's borrowing cost will be 1.5 percent above CBO's predictions for this fiscal year as well as for the next nine years.</p> <p>For the current year, projected higher interest costs could work out to about \$137 billion.</p> <p>The interest numbers keep growing and growing. For fiscal 2024, we're looking at a \$719 billion interest cost if you include my \$194 billion estimate for higher rates.</p> <p>The Fed, which admittedly got a late start battling inflation, is now doing its job as best it can and is trying to tamp down price increases with higher interest rates; the higher interest costs for the Treasury are collateral damage.</p> <p>As for the CBO, it had no way of knowing in May that the Fed would raise interest rates so much so rapidly. Unlike a securities trader, the CBO isn't in the business of modifying its math every time the financial markets have a hiccup, and hasn't updated its May numbers. But when the next update comes, which typically happens in January, the interest numbers may well be high enough to knock your socks off.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 China swiftly ends rare anti-govt. protest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/13/china/china-party-congress-protest-banners-xi-intl-hnk/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/13/china/china-party-congress-protest-banners-xi-intl-hnk/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>A rare protest against <a href="#">Chinese leader Xi Jinping</a> and his policies was swiftly ended in Beijing Thursday, just days before he is set to secure a third term in power at a key meeting of the ruling Communist Party.</p> <p>Photos circulating on Twitter Thursday afternoon show two banners hung on an overpass of a major thoroughfare in the northwest of the Chinese capital, protesting against Xi's unrelenting zero-Covid policy and authoritarian rule.</p> <p>"Say no to Covid test, yes to food. No to lockdown, yes to freedom. No to lies, yes to dignity. No to cultural revolution, yes to reform. No to great leader, yes to vote. Don't be a slave, be a citizen," reads one banner.</p> <p>"Go on strike, remove dictator and national traitor Xi Jinping," reads the other.</p> <p>The photos and videos also show plumes of smoke billowing from the bridge, and a voice recording of the protest slogans played on loudspeaker.</p> <p>CNN cannot independently verify the images and footage, but has geolocated them to Sitong Bridge, an overpass on Beijing's Third Ring Road in Haidian district.</p> <p>When CNN arrived at Sitong Bridge around 3.30 p.m. Thursday, no protesters or banners could be seen. However, a large number of security personnel were on the overpass and in the vicinity. Security personnel were also spotted patrolling every overpass CNN drove by on the Third Ring Road.</p> <p>Chinese authorities have yet to comment on the incident. CNN has reached out to Beijing police for comment.</p> <p>On Chinese social media, discussions about the protest were heavily censored. Some users expressed support and awe for the protest under the hashtags #Beijing and #Haidian. Others shared the Chinese pop hit "Lonely Warrior" in a veiled reference to the protester. Many of these posts were swiftly removed.</p> <p>Public protest against the top leadership is extremely rare in China, especially in the run-up to important political meetings, when authorities turn Beijing into a fortress to maintain security and stability. The</p>



	<p>twice-a-decade Communist Party national congress is the most important event on China's political calendar.</p> <p>At the <a href="#">20th Party Congress</a> beginning on Sunday, Xi is widely expected to break with recent norms and extend his rule for another term, potentially paving the way for lifelong rule.</p> <p>Xi, the most powerful and authoritarian Chinese leader in decades, has waged a sweeping crackdown to crush dissent, both within the party and in wider society.</p> <p>His draconian zero-Covid policy has fueled growing public frustration, as rolling lockdowns upend lives and wreak havoc on the economy.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Orange juice price hikes coming</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/business/consumer/orange-juice-price-hikes-coming-orange-crop-shortage-hurricane-ian-rcna51942">https://www.nbcnews.com/business/consumer/orange-juice-price-hikes-coming-orange-crop-shortage-hurricane-ian-rcna51942</a>
GIST	<p>Florida's orange crop production will likely plummet to record lows this season thanks to Hurricane Ian, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Wednesday. That assessment compounds an already weak citrus production situation in the state.</p> <p>The upshot: The price of orange juice, which has already climbed to an all-time high of \$2.90 per 12-ounce can because of soaring food inflation, could go even higher.</p> <p>The USDA's forecast said 28 million boxes of Florida oranges would be produced in the 2022-23 season. That would be the lowest output since 1943 and down 32% from last year's already low production of approximately 41 million boxes.</p> <p>"We're factoring in a very tight [crop production] situation here," said Jack Scoville, vice president at PRICE Futures Group in Chicago. "The cut was pretty extreme."</p> <p>Florida oranges serve as the feedstock for most orange juice produced in the U.S. The number of Florida oranges available to be used for juice was already near record lows because of the onset of a so-called greening disease, which can cause trees to bear fruit that are smaller and lower in sugar. The outbreak has prompted some Florida farmers to advocate for the Food and Drug Administration to lower its sugar content standards for juice.</p> <p>Scoville said that as domestic prices for orange juice rise, it will become cheaper for many wholesale buyers, like supermarkets, to begin importing juice-ready oranges from overseas.</p> <p>He also predicted that more Americans will switch to Vitamin C supplements as the cost of orange juice begins to climb further.</p> <p>Both of those factors could ultimately prevent orange juice prices from rising faster, he said.</p> <p>But for now, the price will likely continue to head upward, he said.</p> <p>"We were expecting a cut to production, but this is a very big cut," Scoville said. "So the market is reacting accordingly."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Hong Kong as safe harbor for Russians?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-ukraine-war-sanctions-superyacht-nord-hong-kong-china-us-rcna51813">https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-ukraine-war-sanctions-superyacht-nord-hong-kong-china-us-rcna51813</a>

GIST	<p>HONG KONG — A superyacht linked to a Russian oligarch has produced the latest ripple of tensions between the U.S. and <a href="#">China</a> after it moored in Hong Kong’s harbor.</p> <p>Nord, a \$500 million vessel connected to sanctioned tycoon <a href="#">Alexey Mordashov</a>, has been docked in the city since last Wednesday after it made the weeklong journey from the Russian city of Vladivostok.</p> <p>Measuring 464.6 feet, it has two helipads, a swimming pool and 20 cabins, as well as a gym, a sauna and a cinema.</p> <p><a href="#">Hong Kong</a> said Tuesday it would not seize the superyacht, defying Washington and raising fears that the global financial hub could become a haven for people sanctioned over the <a href="#">war in Ukraine</a>.</p> <p>Mordashov, one of Russia’s richest men, was sanctioned by the U.S., the United Kingdom and the <a href="#">European Union</a> in February, days after Russia invaded Ukraine. His company, Severstal, did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the Nord.</p> <p>Hong Kong’s leader, John Lee, said Tuesday that the city had no legal basis to act on a Russian oligarch’s superyacht in the city.</p> <p>“We will comply with United Nations sanctions,” Lee said at a news conference. “We cannot do and we will not do anything that has no legal basis.”</p> <p>Russia, a permanent member of the <a href="#">United Nations Security Council</a>, has vetoed all attempts to take action on Ukraine, which could include sanctions against people like Mordashov.</p> <p>The State Department said in a statement Monday that it would “strongly encourage all jurisdictions to take actions under their domestic authorities to help implement sanctions imposed by the United States and more than 30 other countries.”</p> <p>It added that “Hong Kong’s reputation as a financial center depends on adherence to international laws and standards” and that “the possible use of Hong Kong as a safe haven by individuals evading sanctions from multiple jurisdictions further calls into question the transparency of the business environment.”</p> <p>U.S. and European authorities have seized over a dozen yachts belonging to sanctioned Russian tycoons to prevent them from sailing to other ports that are not affected by the sanctions. So Russian oligarchs have begun docking their yachts at ports in places like <a href="#">Turkey</a>, which has maintained diplomatic ties with <a href="#">Russia</a> since the war began.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Mississippi River level critically low</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/10/12/mississippi-river-drought-low-levels-agriculture/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/10/12/mississippi-river-drought-low-levels-agriculture/</a>
GIST	<p>The Mississippi River is flowing at its lowest level in at least a decade, and until rain relieves a worsening drought in the region, it’s becoming increasingly difficult to maintain water levels high enough to carry critical exports from the nation’s bread basket.</p> <p>Areas of persistent and developing drought stretch across much of the Mississippi basin, which itself covers 41 percent of the contiguous United States. Though <a href="#">record-setting storms caused catastrophic flooding</a> in parts of the watershed this summer, the past few months have been among the driest on record in parts of the Heartland, at a time of year when river levels are normally hitting their low points. And long-term forecasts suggest that unusually dry weather is likely to continue.</p> <p>At some spots, gauges reported the Mississippi’s river stages — a measure of water height normally used to evaluate flood conditions — with negative values, an indication of how far below normal levels the waters have receded.</p>



There's also a risk for drinking water. The relative trickle that is reaching the river's mouth in Louisiana's outlying Plaquemines Parish is allowing salt water to intrude up the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico, threatening to taint drinking water drawn from the river and requiring emergency action by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Repeatedly over the past week, water levels have become too low for barges to float, requiring the corps to halt maritime traffic on the river and dredge channels deep enough even for barges carrying lighter-than-normal loads. Days after a queue of stalled river traffic grew to more than 1,700 barges during emergency dredging near Vicksburg, Miss., a separate 24-hour dredging closure began Tuesday near Memphis. More dredging, which routinely costs billions of dollars a year, could be needed if barges continue to run aground.

The transportation industry says the intervention is needed to maintain a flow of exports that is central to the country's agriculture industry. About 60 percent of U.S. corn and soybean exports move down the Mississippi, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the Arkansas, Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee rivers, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Commerce is moving, albeit very slowly," said Deb Calhoun, a senior vice president for the Waterways Council, a transportation industry group. "Ultimately, we need rain, and lots of it."

Drought is pronounced across much of the country west of the Mississippi, including some two-thirds of the northern Plains states that drain to the Missouri River and then the Mississippi, U.S. Drought Monitor data show.

Precipitation totals rank among the 15th driest that Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and South Dakota have seen for June through September. It has been Nebraska's third-driest recorded stretch of summer into fall, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information.

Such a drastic constriction in water flows across such a large area has translated to an unusually lasting impact on Mississippi River levels. The last time dry conditions had such an effect on the river was a decade ago.

If those areas "were to stay dry through the rest of the year, levels could be even worse than we had in 2012," said Jeffrey Grascel, service coordination hydrologist at the National Weather Service's Lower Mississippi River Forecast Center. "It just remains to be seen how much rain we get over the next month to three months."

River levels are not expected to hit record lows just yet. It's difficult to compare current conditions across the record books because the river's banks have changed so dramatically from preindustrial times, Grascel said — on the Mississippi alone, waters pass through dozens of locks and dams. But if the current dry conditions surpass those observed in 2012, they might approach the severity of a 1988 low-water crisis, he said.

Long-term weather forecasts suggest no significant change in precipitation patterns in the coming weeks. Hydrologists predict sustained drought, as well as areas of newly developing drought across the western half of the country this month, according to the Climate Prediction Center.

While the center said it expects near-normal precipitation patterns over the next week or two across the Mississippi basin, bringing some chances for rain, dry conditions are predicted to resume for the latter part of October and into early November.

In the meantime, the low river levels are causing costly problems, and even [exposed a 19th century shipwreck](#) in downtown Baton Rouge.

Plaquemines Parish warned residents on Sept. 28 that drinking water drawn from the Mississippi contained elevated levels of sodium and chloride, a potential health issue for people on dialysis or low-sodium diets. As the southward river flow slackens, a layer of saltwater from the Gulf of Mexico is creeping up the Delta, forming a wedge at the bottom of the river because salt water is heavier than fresh water, Grasciel explained.

To protect the community, the Army Corps of Engineers said Sept. 28 that it would build a sediment barrier across the river channel to prevent more salt water from flowing northward.

That work is in addition to the corps' routine dredging of the lower Mississippi that has only become more important as river flow has waned. The corps dredges an average of about 265 million cubic yards of river bottom in the Mississippi Valley each year, at a price tag that totaled \$2.45 billion in 2020, spokeswoman Lisa Parker said.

An estimate of ongoing emergency dredging work was not available, she said. But the low water conditions are making work that was already extensive more difficult, ensuring depths of at least 9 feet along 4,267 linear miles of channels, Parker said.

Parker noted that, though costly, the work to maintain a viable transportation network on the country's inland rivers represents what the corps estimates to be \$12.5 billion in transportation cost savings, because moving cargo over water is cheaper than on rail cars or tractor-trailers.

For its part, the industry has limited the amount of cargo attached to any single towboat — only up to 25 barges, instead of the typical 40, Calhoun said. Still, barges continue to run aground. On the Ohio River, even, waters are low enough that barges got stuck this week near that waterway's confluence with the Mississippi, transportation company American Commercial Barge Line reported.

"This situation underscores the importance of the inland waterways and the Mississippi River as an artery to commerce," Calhoun said.

But others disagree, saying the problem demonstrates that nature can't be tamed. The Mississippi has changed so much from its natural state, it has become "a volatile system," said Robert Criss, a professor emeritus of earth and planetary sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. Though that volatility is often most evident during floods, Criss said his research shows it can affect the river on a day-to-day basis.

"You don't want things being unpredictable, and that's what we have," he said. "We have an unpredictable river."

Until significant rainfall arrives, river flow is getting some help, for now, as pools used to store floodwaters along the Ohio and Missouri rivers are being emptied to make room for winter storm runoff, Parker said. But that is only expected to continue through this month, she said — unless authorities decide to hold some of the waters back.

Then, they could be released should river waters drop to critically low levels in the coming months.

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HEADLINE	10/13 Day 232 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/13/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-232-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/13/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-232-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The United Nations general assembly on Wednesday overwhelmingly voted to condemn Russia's annexation of parts of Ukraine</b> as 35 nations abstained including China, India, South Africa and Pakistan. The resolution "condemns the organisation by the Russian Federation of so-called referendums within the internationally recognised borders of Ukraine" and "the attempted illegal annexation" announced last month of four regions by Russia president Vladimir Putin.</li></ul>

- **A Russian nuclear strike would “almost certainly” trigger a “physical response” from Ukraine’s allies and potentially from Nato, a senior Nato official has said.** Any use of nuclear weapons by Moscow would have [“unprecedented consequences”](#) for Russia, the official was quoted by Reuters as saying.
- **The US will need to [deter two major nuclear weapons powers](#) for the first time,** the Biden administration has warned. Washington’s new national security strategy (NSS) depicts China as the most capable long-term competitor, but Russia as the more immediate, disruptive threat, pointing to its nuclear posturing over Ukraine. “Russia’s conventional military will have been weakened, which will likely increase Moscow’s reliance on nuclear weapons in its military planning,” the strategy blueprint reads.
- **Putin will meet Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in what is likely to be a “very interesting” meeting in Kazakhstan on Thursday,** where the Turkish leader [may propose ideas for peace](#) in Ukraine, the Kremlin has said.
- **Ukraine’s army [boasted of territorial gains](#) near the strategically vital southern city of Kherson on Wednesday.** Five settlements in the Beryslav district in the north-east of the Kherson region – Novovasylivka, Novogrygorivka, Nova Kamyanka, Tryfonivka, Chervone – were said to have been taken from Russian forces over the day.
- **Nato allies delivered new air defence systems in the wake of Russia’s recent missile attacks across the country.** Ukraine’s defence minister, Oleksiy Reznikov, [lauded the arrival](#) of the first of four Iris-T defence systems from Germany and an “expedited” delivery of sophisticated National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (Nasams) from the US. France has promised radar and air defence systems in the coming weeks while Canada said it would provide artillery rounds and winter clothing and Britain pledged to donate Amraam anti-aircraft missiles capable of shooting down cruise missiles.
- **External power [has been restored to](#) Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant,** according to the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Rafael Grossi had warned earlier that the loss of off-site power at the facility, Europe’s largest, [was “deeply worrying”](#).
- **Ukrainians are being reduce their electricity consumption during peak hours to avoid blackouts.** Prime minister Denys Shmyhal appealed to citizens and businesses to reduce power consumption from 5pm to 10pm by 25%. “This is a necessity and this is our contribution to the victory. After all, it depends on each of us how we will get through this winter,” he said.
- **The European Commission will next week present plans to mitigate soaring energy costs.** Energy commissioner Kadri Simson told reporters on Wednesday that the commission would bring forward a proposal that includes joint gas purchases by 2023. By harnessing the bloc’s collective purchasing power, she said, the EU could “avoid member states outbidding each other on the market” and thus “driving up” prices.
- **Putin says Russia is ready to resume gas supplies via one link of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that remains operational.** The [ball was in the EU’s court](#) on whether it wanted gas supplied via the pipeline, Putin said in an address to the Russian Energy Week international forum.
- **The head of the Russian state-owned gas monopoly supplier, Gazprom, has warned Europe of the consequences of renouncing Russian gas.** There is [“no guarantee” that Europe would survive winter](#) based on its current gas storage capacity, Alexei Miller said, adding that gas in Germany’s underground storage would be enough for between two- and two-and-a-half months.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Ukraine crowdfunding: kamikaze drones
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/12/ukraine-crowdfunding-kamikaze-drones-russian-attack-cities-military">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/12/ukraine-crowdfunding-kamikaze-drones-russian-attack-cities-military</a>
GIST	<p>A crowdfunding appeal that was launched after Russian attacks on cities across the country on Monday has raised \$9.6m (£8.7m) in 24 hours for the purchase of kamikaze drones for the Ukrainian armed forces.</p> <p>An initial 50 Ram II drones, unmanned aerial vehicles with a 3kg explosive payload, designed and built by Ukrainian companies, will be bought with the money, along with three control stations.</p>

Further munitions would be secured over the coming days, said Serhiy Prytula, who organised the initiative.

He said: “They wanted to scare us but we united even more. Remember: never infuriate Ukrainians. Never. The people have donated for the revenge, so we will ensure the revenge happens.”

Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, told G7 leaders on Tuesday via video conference that Russia had used a variety of munitions to strike Ukrainian cities over the previous two days, killing 20 people.

“The enemy has used more than 100 cruise missiles, dozens of different drones, including Iranian Shaheds,” he said. “And every 10 minutes I receive a message about the enemy’s use of Iranian Shaheds.”

Zelenskiy added that Ukrainian intelligence believed Russia had ordered 2,400 Shahed-136 kamikaze drones from Iran, as he called on the west to provide Ukraine with better air-defence systems.

Shahed-136 drones, which like the Ram II are not designed to return from a trip, are made by the Iranian Aircraft Industrial Company and are said by their manufacturers to have a flight range of 1,000km. They are slow and contain a noisy Chinese MD550 engine but can be difficult to shoot down when sent in a swarm.

The Ram II UAV has a flight range of 30km but has proven to be effective in combat, with footage shared on social media of one destroying a Russian 9K33 Osa surface-to-air missile system said to be worth £634,000.

Serhii Sternenko, an activist who co-founded the crowdfunding exercise, which was closed after 26 hours, said 1m UAH (£24,507) had been donated in the first seven minutes of the appeal from people in bomb shelters and elsewhere.

He said: “Crowdfunding campaigns make our defence stronger; we, the people, help the Ukrainian army. But we still need more weapons from our allies to stop this terror and the crime of genocide Russia commits daily in this European country.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Puerto Rico: longest blackout in US history</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/12/power-outages-puerto-rico-hurricane-fiona">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/12/power-outages-puerto-rico-hurricane-fiona</a>
GIST	<p>Alexis Robles has slept a mere three hours a night since <a href="#">Hurricane Fiona</a> hit Puerto Rico on 18 September, causing a total blackout across the Caribbean island.</p> <p>Robles, 52, a systems analyst in the seaside town of Cabo Rojo in south-west <a href="#">Puerto Rico</a>, has been living without power for 25 days.</p> <p>At night, the temperature barely dips below 80F, and Robles wakes up after an hour or two covered in sweat. The days are marked by high temperatures and rain, and without a fan or air conditioning the mosquitoes are unbearable.</p> <p>Robles lives in an 80-apartment condominium complex with a backup generator that produces only enough electricity to power the water pump and light the communal areas after dark. Those with somewhere else to go have left, he says; the remaining residents are just trying to get by.</p> <p>“We have no electricity during the day, people here are desperate, just trying to survive, worried that this could end up like Maria,” said Robles.</p> <p>Fiona, a category 1 storm when it struck the island and the first major hurricane of the 2022 season, hit Puerto Rico exactly five years after hurricanes Irma and Maria made landfall two weeks apart, destroying</p>

much of the island's electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure, leading to thousands of preventable deaths and the longest blackout in US history.

The storm left the vast majority of [Puerto Rico and its 3 million residents without power or water](#) for several days.

After Maria, Robles and his neighbours were left without power for five months. Now, three and half weeks after Fiona, they have no idea when electricity will be restored.

"What infuriates us the most is that Luma is claiming most of the island has power, when that is obviously not true," said Robles, referring to the private US-Canadian consortium that took over electricity transmission and distribution in June 2021.

Luma [claims](#) it has restored power to 99% of homes and businesses. But three and a half weeks on, about 20,000 customers – the equivalent of 40,000 people – [remain without power](#), according to the company's own figures. The worst-affected neighbourhoods are in the south and south-west of the island, where Fiona made landfall.

Andrés Gutiérrez, a general physician in Cabo Rojo, said around a third of the town's 50,000 inhabitants remain without power – including many of his patients. Electricity posts are still down, cables damaged by falling vegetation – which many Puerto Ricans blame on the lack of regular maintenance.

"The situation is very tense, people are tired of being stuck in the middle of Luma and political interests. We pay so much for electricity and billions of dollars have gone into the system that is basically obsolete," said Gutiérrez, 46, who also went five months without power after Maria.

Luma claims to have restored power to his street, he said, but half the homes still don't have any service from the grid and rely on backup generators and solar panels.

They are among the lucky ones able to invest in backups after Maria, Gutiérrez said, but for many on low incomes – including some of his patients – this wasn't an option. "I have diabetic patients living off fast food and bread because the refrigerator is off – it's causing a domino effect on people's health," he said.

Over the past two decades, Puerto Rico – along with Haiti and Myanmar – has been among three territories most affected by extreme weather such as storms, floods, heatwaves and droughts, according to the [Germanwatch Climate Risk Index](#), which are becoming more intense due to global heating.

As those threats increase, Fiona for many residents has illustrated the ongoing fragility of the island's energy system – despite the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) having approved an unprecedented \$16bn for reconstruction and mitigation.

Much of the existing energy infrastructure – plants, transmitter towers, poles and cables – is in [flood-prone areas](#) or at risk of sea level rise, storm surges and tsunamis, as well as strong winds and earthquake damage. None of the federal funds have been [allocated to distributed rooftop solar](#) – a decentralised energy alternative which grassroots activists and environmental experts argue would be cheaper, cleaner and more resilient.

About 10 miles north-east of Cabo Rojo on the outskirts of the city of Mayagüez, another doctor, Alfredo Pérez, is spending more than \$40 a day on diesel to power his generator – a polluting luxury that has been in short supply.

Pérez, 57, a neurologist, also has many patients without electricity including an elderly neighbour with Parkinson's disease whose wife is fretting about how long this power outage will go on. "This was only a category 1, and here we are again, 25 days later waiting for answers."

Luma has been contacted for comment.

HEADLINE	10/12 Ukraine exploits Russia incompetence
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-ukraines-strategy-is-running-circles-around-russias-lumbering-military-11665584517?mod=hp_lead_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-ukraines-strategy-is-running-circles-around-russias-lumbering-military-11665584517?mod=hp_lead_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>Eight months into <a href="#">Ukraine's war</a> with Russia, its emerging strategy is combining classic military operations with <a href="#">opportunism</a> on the battlefield to exploit the incompetence of Russian forces—and is changing the course of the battle.</p> <p>Ukraine's command structure encourages junior officers to make in-the-moment battlefield decisions, an authority that they have used to seize opportunities and quickly take advantage of enemy weaknesses.</p> <p>Russians, by contrast, have been slowed by a Soviet-era decision-making structure, in which orders trickle down the chain of command from Moscow, and troops at the front lines take little initiative. In weeks, Ukraine has cleared Russian forces from thousands of square miles in the Kharkiv region of the country's northeast. Its forces are now advancing south toward the occupied city of Kherson, a regional capital.</p> <p>Rather than directly engaging with the grinding artillery exchanges and tank battles that Russia favors, Ukraine has sought instead to surround Russian forces and cut off supply lines. It has effectively integrated Soviet-era equipment with long-range precision <a href="#">Western artillery and rocket systems</a> to starve its enemy of fuel, ammunition and other supplies.</p> <p>A Russian-built bridge to Crimea critical to supplying Russian forces on the peninsula was seriously damaged in an explosion Saturday that Moscow has blamed on Ukraine. Russian President <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a> said Monday he would strike back, hours after his forces launched a barrage of missiles hitting civilians and energy infrastructure in Kyiv and other cities. Russia has denied targeting civilians and residential infrastructure.</p> <p>Mr. Putin has responded to the battlefield setbacks with a politically risky military draft of hundreds of thousands of civilians and appears to be digging in for a long campaign.</p> <p>While Moscow retains a large proportion of its gains from the war's early days, and nobody knows how the conflict will end, Western military historians say Ukraine's battlefield successes will be long studied. They cite parallels to classic military strategies used in major conflicts over the past century.</p> <p>The Ukrainian advances in the east and the south of the country looked like separate operations but in retrospect they appear to be part of a coordinated plan. "I see them as part of a whole," said Phillips O'Brien, professor of strategic studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.</p> <p>Ukraine telegraphed its plan to attack Kherson in the south as early as August. In response, Russia reinforced its southern front with thousands of its more experienced troops.</p> <p>Moscow's decision reflected the economic importance of the region, which controls access and water supplies to Russian-occupied Crimea. But moving its troops there meant depleting its forces in the east. The Kharkiv region was left with a single layer of defense, manned largely by poor-performing troops from Russian-controlled separatist enclaves nearby.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces took advantage of those weakened defenses last month, launching a surprise advance in Kharkiv. Once Ukrainian forces succeeded in punching a hole in the line, they retook thousands of square miles of territory, and the Russians made a chaotic retreat. The attack delivered a victory that boosted morale, as well as Ukraine's standing among its Western allies.</p> <p>The attack in Kharkiv was made possible by the Kherson operation, Mr. O'Brien said.</p>



Military historians say the rout of Russian forces on the Kharkiv front with a highly mobile force—known as maneuver warfare—echoes classic examples of the strategy in the 20th century.

François Heisbourg, defense adviser at the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research, likened the operation to German Gen. Heinz Guderian's crossing of the River Meuse in Belgium against French forces in May 1940. The move helped to open the rest of Belgium and northern France to a rapid advance by German armor.

Mr. Heisbourg also cited Israeli Maj. Gen. Ariel Sharon's surprise move over the Suez Canal in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, which decisively shifted the war against Egypt and other Arab states in Israel's favor.

While Ukrainian forces moved quickly into Kharkiv, the Kherson front moved slowly. Facing a larger, better-performing force than in Kharkiv, Ukrainian troops over weeks wore down Russian resistance by striking supply depots and routes across bridges over the Dnipro River, cutting off thousands of Russian troops in and around Kherson.

Having secured a bridgehead onto the eastern bank of the Inhulets River in August, Ukrainian troops began this month to press down the western bank of the Dnipro, threatening a pincer movement around Russian forces and forcing a retreat.

### **Agility, arms**

Mick Ryan, a military strategist and retired major general in the Australian army, said Ukraine has sequenced its campaigns to great effect.

He described the Ukrainian strategy as one of corrosion, the hollowing out of the physical, moral and intellectual capacity of Russian forces to fight.

Ukraine has used "an indirect approach," Mr. Ryan said, which was first outlined by the 20th century British military strategist Basil Liddell Hart. It seeks to change the balance of force "by draining the enemy's force, weakening him by pricks instead of risking blows." The approach capitalizes on surprise and nimble movement.

"Russians want attrition, they want formations clashing en masse—that's where they're used to having the advantage," said John Spencer, chair of urban warfare studies at the Madison Policy Forum. "But the Ukrainians won't give them that."

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said Ukraine's introduction from the West of a command-and-control model based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization provided a competitive advantage. "A junior commanding officer has the ability to make decisions depending on the situation and takes responsibility for himself, for his soldiers and for the territory," he said.

Eliot Cohen, a military historian and strategist with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the Russians "are capable of making big decisions, but I wouldn't call it an agile military, by a long shot."

Especially not compared with the Ukrainians, he said: "When they see opportunities, they'll take them and, in war, there are always opportunities."

Modern tools of warfare critical to Ukraine include precision long-range artillery and rocket launchers provided by the U.S. and other allies. Together with shared Western intelligence and drones, which help Ukrainian forces to see over the horizon, the advanced weapons, including HIMARS, have allowed Ukraine to hit supply lines, air-defenses and military bases far behind enemy lines.

The speed and mobility of Western military vehicles—including infantry fighting vehicles and personnel carriers—have given Ukrainian forces the upper hand in piercing Russian defensive lines, quickly expanding control and creating fear among enemy troops.

“Without high mobility, we wouldn’t have been able to outplay Russians in terms of maneuvers,” said Mykola Bielieskov, research fellow at the Kyiv-based National Institute for Strategic Studies, a government-backed think tank.

### **Two steps back**

Russian failures also helped open the way for Ukraine’s advance in the Kharkiv region. When Ukrainian commandos slipped behind enemy lines last month, they were stunned to find Russian troops so unprepared.

At the end of August, drone teams and special-forces squads crept through forests and along treelines to probe for weak points. They were surprised by how relaxed Russian soldiers appeared, barely seeking cover from aerial surveillance. There were only a handful of armored vehicles in front-line villages.

The reconnaissance teams called in artillery strikes using Starlink—a U.S. satellite system providing access to the internet—targeting ammunition depots, vehicles and personnel. Intelligence officers used radio intercepts and other surveillance to locate enemy positions. Drone pilots offered artillerymen a range of targets and sometimes called in strikes directly. Paratroopers and other assault units fanned out through villages, communicating on encrypted radios.

Russia’s military often had no internet or cellphone signal, and radios reached only a couple of miles.

Russian forces dug few trenches around positions in the Kharkiv region, allowing Ukrainian forces to quickly push toward occupied towns. In many cases, only land mines slowed the Ukrainians’ advance, including those they had laid themselves during their retreat five months earlier.

The Ukraine forces advanced roughly 50 miles within days, flushing thousands of Russian troops from northeastern Kharkiv. They avoided street fighting in urban centers, including the cities of Balakliya and Shevchenkove, by seizing villages around them, and then surrounding the Russians in small pockets, forcing them to withdraw.

Many Russians ran, leaving behind equipment as well as their dead and wounded. Unlike the Russians, Ukraine hasn’t bombarded cities, avoiding the hostility of residents, whose loyalties may be mixed.

Ukrainian troops pushed ahead to the Oskil River, cutting the main Russian supply lines from the north. Izyum, the largest city in the area, was nearly surrounded. Forces pressed from the south to block the last road out.

By Sept. 10, the Russians had withdrawn, sometimes commandeering civilian vehicles to escape. Soldiers raced across fields in armored vehicles that got stuck, forcing a retreat on foot. Moscow said it was regrouping forces in the Donetsk region and called the hasty withdrawal an organized operation.

The Russians left behind hundreds of tanks, howitzers and fighting vehicles. Ukrainians got many of them running to use against their former owners.

“We didn’t have air superiority, we didn’t have superiority in firepower, we just had the proper conditions and exploited lower concentration of Russian troops, their lack of reserves and geography,” Mr. Bielieskov said.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-overwhelmingly-condemns-russian-move-to-annex-ukrainian-regions-11665611422">https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-overwhelmingly-condemns-russian-move-to-annex-ukrainian-regions-11665611422</a>
GIST	<p>United Nations members overwhelmingly rejected Moscow's <a href="#">move to annex four regions of Ukraine</a>, dealing a symbolic blow to President Vladimir Putin and putting 143 nations on the record as not recognizing Russia's latest territorial expansion.</p> <p>Still, 35 U.N. members abstained from the vote, showing the limits of lobbying by the U.S. and other Western countries that sought to convince developing economies to reject Russia's moves and isolate Moscow diplomatically. China, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Thailand and Vietnam were among the countries abstaining from the vote.</p> <p>Russia voted against the resolution, along with Belarus, Nicaragua, North Korea and Syria—a smaller group of supporters than in some previous U.N. votes this year.</p> <p>The General Assembly can't enforce resolutions on world security; the U.N. Security Council failed to adopt a similar resolution due to a veto from Russia, a permanent member.</p> <p>The vote shows that more countries—including Moscow's partners in the Middle East—are ready to speak out against <a href="#">Russia's broad invasion of Ukraine</a> this year. A 2014 General Assembly vote on a similar resolution <a href="#">rejecting the annexation of Crimea</a> attracted only 100 votes.</p> <p>"Nearly eight months into this war, the world has just demonstrated that it is more united, and more determined than ever to hold Russia accountable for its violations," President Biden said in a statement. "Together with the UN General Assembly, we will not tolerate illegal attempts at annexation or the theft of a neighbor's land by force."</p> <p>Wednesday's resolution "condemns the Russian Federation's organization of illegal so-called referenda in regions within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and the attempted illegal annexation of Ukraine's regions of <a href="#">Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia</a>." It also rejects the annexation effort as legally invalid and backs the "de-escalation of the current situation and a peaceful resolution of the conflict.</p> <p>Explaining his country's abstention, China's deputy U.N. ambassador, Geng Shuang, said Wednesday's vote doesn't achieve Beijing's goals of promoting de-escalation and avoiding international division. "China will always stand on the side of peace," he said.</p> <p>Minutes later, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, called out countries for seeking peace without rejecting Russia's actions, which she and other diplomats say violates the U.N. Charter. "Peace does not and has never come from silence," she said before the vote.</p> <p>Russia's ambassador to the U.N., Vasily Nebenzya, accused the West of a double standard for supporting governments in Kosovo and Taiwan while rejecting Russia's claims that citizens of the Ukrainian territories it invaded want to separate from Kyiv.</p> <p>Residents of the territories in question "do not want to return to Ukraine," Mr. Nebenzya said, without offering evidence.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Will US, Saudi military ties endure?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/amid-u-s-saudi-tensions-officials-say-military-ties-will-endure-11665602998?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/amid-u-s-saudi-tensions-officials-say-military-ties-will-endure-11665602998?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1</a>
GIST	WASHINGTON—The U.S. isn't currently planning any significant changes to the number of U.S. forces stationed in Saudi Arabia but some aspects of the two nations' extensive defense cooperation could be affected following <a href="#">President Biden's decision to reassess relations</a> after OPEC+ unveiled an oil production cut, U.S. officials said.

The officials said that the U.S. relationship was too critical to American interests in the Middle East to change the overall course and that the U.S. was determined to continue [its strategic cooperation with Riyadh](#) that is central to combating Iran. But there could be a decline in some areas of defense cooperation.

Last week, for instance, the U.S. canceled its participation in a working group between the U.S. and the Gulf Cooperation Council on Iran, which was scheduled to take place Oct. 17, U.S. officials said. The meeting was to focus on integrating defense among regional allies, in particular missile defense.

The officials added that the U.S. could also slow some of the huge amounts of arms sales that Saudi Arabia engages in annually to send a message of U.S. displeasure.

Many Democratic lawmakers have called for those sales to stop but any congressional action to force a halt is unlikely to have the votes to pass in Congress. U.S. and European defense officials say those sales—which have amounted to at least \$130 billion of proposed or completed military sales since 2010—provide an enduring and tangible link to maintaining Saudi relations.

“The Saudis are trying to make their military more like our military, and the Pentagon sees that as an important initiative,” said Jon Alterman, who directs the Middle East program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The U.S. officials added that harming the military relationship could make countering Iran, improving Saudi-Israeli relations and resolving other regional issues more challenging. There already has been an erosion in some aspects of [the two nations’ defense cooperation](#), and officials said it was important that they not deteriorate further. Otherwise, Saudi Arabia may conclude that [Chinese and Russian military support](#) is enough to rely on for defense against the kingdom’s top foe, Iran, creating a new alliance with U.S. rivals that would greatly concern the West, the officials said.

U.S. forces have trained their Saudi counterparts, advised them on their military operations and in the past supported Saudi forces in [the kingdom’s war in Yemen](#) with arms, refueling and advice, though that cooperation has diminished in recent years. About 3,000 U.S. troops are currently based in Saudi Arabia.

“On the military side, I can’t imagine that the U.S. is going to stop training [Saudi forces] because it’s not in our interest to not have the Saudis better trained,” said Jonathan Panikoff, director of the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative, a think tank. He added that intelligence sharing also is likely to continue: “Stopping cooperation there would undermine U.S. national security.”

In a statement released on Twitter, the Saudi foreign ministry said the government views its relationship with the U.S. as “a strategic one that serves the common interests of both countries.”

“The Kingdom also stresses the importance of building on the solid pillars upon which the Saudi-U.S. relationship had stood over the past eight decades,” the statement read. “These pillars include mutual respect, enhancing common interests, actively contributing to preserve regional and international peace and security, countering terrorism and extremism, and achieving prosperity for the peoples of the region.”

The U.S.-Saudi relationship has been on rocky ground since Mr. Biden took office last year, given his decision to renegotiate a nuclear deal with Iran and his public condemnation of Saudi Arabia as a pariah state.

[Mr. Biden’s visit to Saudi Arabia](#) this summer signaled his intention to work closely with the kingdom on a range of issues, particularly energy cooperation, despite criticism from some within his own Democratic Party that he was turning a blind eye to the kingdom’s human-rights record.

Then last week, the [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its Russia-led allies, known as OPEC+](#), agreed to an oil production cut of 2 million barrels a day after months of U.S. public and private pleas that such a move would have serious consequences amid a global energy crisis.

Mr. Biden said afterward that the U.S. would reassess its relationship with the Saudis but didn't provide specifics. Some U.S. officials said they viewed the cut as a swipe at the administration ahead of [November's midterm elections](#) when control of Congress is at stake.

U.S. lawmakers reintroduced a bill to immediately suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia. And three Democratic legislators introduced a bill that would remove U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia and another 2,000 U.S. troops from the U.A.E., as well as military equipment like the Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems that Riyadh uses.

"We see no reason why American troops and contractors should continue to provide this service to countries that are actively working against us," the legislators wrote in a statement, adding that Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. were effectively aiding Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) in his invasion of Ukraine with a move that was designed to support the global price of oil.

Congressional officials said the bills are unlikely to pass as there is no consensus on Capitol Hill about how to respond to the OPEC+ decision or even whether Saudi Arabia should face a U.S. response. Some legislators have proposed improving domestic oil and gas production instead. Others don't want cooperation affected in any way. Sen. Joni Ernst (R., Iowa) in a Wednesday letter to national security adviser Jake Sullivan, viewed by The Wall Street Journal, said canceling the GCC meeting "delays partner capacity, worsens regional security, and aids our adversaries."

Although military ties are likely to be little-affected by the recent tensions, they have diminished in some important aspects in recent years as tensions between the two nations have increased. Mr. Biden has criticized the country over human-rights abuses and [the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi](#), which the American intelligence community concluded was ordered by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The U.S. also has ended operational support for Saudi military operations in Yemen, which Saudi Arabia has complained weakens their negotiating position with the Houthis they have been fighting. And the U.S. has reduced the number of troops in the region. After [the U.S. military abruptly withdrew from Afghanistan](#) last year, Gulf nations including Saudi Arabia feared the U.S. was leaving the Middle East to focus on China.

A year ago, the Saudis abruptly canceled a meeting with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin without an explanation. Hours later, the Saudis released a photo on social media showing Saudi national security officials meeting instead with Russian officials.

During a visit in May to Saudi Arabia by the head of U.S. Central Command, Army Gen. Erik Kurilla, U.S. aircrews transporting the general prepared for two flight routes—to Prince Sultan Air Base, where U.S. troops were stationed, and to Jeddah, where Crown Prince Mohammed was staying on the off-chance a visit would happen. Gen. Kurilla eventually flew to the air base. Neither Gen. Kurilla nor Secretary Austin have met face-to-face with the crown prince.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Russia new border rules for annex regions
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/12/ukraine-zaporizhzhia-kherson-russia-annexation/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/12/ukraine-zaporizhzhia-kherson-russia-annexation/</a>
GIST	ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — While raining missiles down on Ukrainian land it has failed to capture on the battlefield, Russia is seeking to solidify its illegal annexation of four regions by imposing new border controls and limiting travel outside of occupied territories.

The new measures demonstrate the Kremlin's intent to absorb the four regions despite global censure, including demands by leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized powers that Russia "completely and unconditionally withdraw" its troops.

Ukrainian civilians who fled Russian-held territory in recent days said in interviews on Wednesday that they were required to provide extensive documentation to leave, including birth certificates, expected return dates, and even the serial numbers of their cellphones.

In Zaporizhzhia, a region that Russia now claims as its own but only partially controls, the new measures have slowed the exodus to a trickle in recent days. People hoping to reach Ukrainian-controlled territory fear exposing their families to Russian scrutiny.

"The Russians are trying to install a permanent, official border crossing, and so these are the measures that they are trying to establish," said Oleksii Savvitskyi, a Ukrainian official who oversees the arrival of civilian convoys from Russian-held territory to the regional capital, also called Zaporizhzhia, which is still under Ukrainian control.

The heightened restrictions came as Western allies rushed new weapons to Ukraine, including state-of-the-art German IRIS-T air defense systems, in response to the barrage of Russian missiles in recent days that hit power plants and other critical infrastructure and killed at least 20 people across Ukraine.

The missile attacks were a main topic of discussion in Brussels on Wednesday as members of the international Ukraine Defense Contact Group, led by U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, met at NATO headquarters and said they would increase military assistance to Kyiv. Allied defense ministers were due to continue those conversations Thursday.

Russia's effort to tighten control over occupied areas underscored the enormous stakes of a Ukrainian counteroffensive that moved swiftly in September and early October but has now slowed.

Before Russian President Vladimir Putin's Sept. 30 announcement that four Ukrainian provinces now belonged to him, arrivals in the city of Zaporizhzhia from occupied areas had averaged about 2,000 people a day, officials said.

The number has plummeted to about 60. Families applying for permission to leave have at times spent up to two weeks sleeping in gas stations or hotels as they shuttle between Russian security agencies, which often provide contradictory information.

On Wednesday, scores queued in Zaporizhzhia to board buses bound for the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, many of them intending to leave the country entirely.

They were quiet as they waited and carried few possessions. Families interviewed by The Washington Post said they had not even contemplated leaving until this week.

But Putin's annexation announcement was followed by waves of S-300 missiles each night. Parents hustled their children into basements. "I just knew we couldn't stay anymore," said Sasha Valuiskyi, 31, as his wife and two children boarded a bus.

Valuiskyi, however, was not going with them. Ukrainian authorities have barred men of fighting age from leaving the country during wartime. So instead he watched, in tears, as his sons, ages 11 and 3, boarded the bus with their mother while he stood on the street alone. "They need to go, it's not safe here," he said. "We agreed that this was the only option."

When the bus pulled away, he followed it on foot as far as he could and held his face in his hands as the vehicle drove off into the distance. Through its windows, his boys looked inconsolable.



Ukrainian cities scrambled to repair power plants and other infrastructure smashed by Russian bombs, and citizens grappled with sporadic power outages. Top U.S. and NATO officials said Wednesday that they were outraged by Russia's "indiscriminate" attacks on civilians and that they were pushing to get Ukraine additional air defenses as quickly as possible.

Denouncing the "malice and cruelty" of Russia's recent escalation, Austin said there is strong will to get Ukrainian forces the weapons, ammunition and equipment on their wish list. "We're going to do everything we can, as fast as we can, to help the Ukrainian forces get the capability they need to protect the Ukrainian people," he said at a news conference at NATO headquarters.

But supplying advanced air defense systems to Ukraine and making sure they are operational is not a simple task, U.S. and NATO officials said.

Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said getting Ukraine missile defense systems will be "quite complicated from a technical standpoint" and will "take a bit of time."

A senior NATO official, speaking on condition of anonymity to brief reporters, said Ukrainians now have considerable momentum, but Russia shows no intention of backing down.

The Ukrainians "are on their front foot," the official said. "They are on the front foot both in the east and south, taking the fight to the enemy with vigor and effect"

But, the official said, "I still don't see any sign that Putin is bending from his objectives, strategic or operational, in Ukraine." The official, "Putin remains in complete control and is calling the shots."

Zaporizhzhia has been among the hardest hit by missile strikes in recent days. The deadliest strike came in late September as civilians lined up to collect relatives from Russian-held territory. At least 30 people were killed and more than 80 wounded when three missiles landed around them.

But the attack sent a message across the line of control, as hundreds of Ukrainians learned the news while waiting to leave.

"It made the journey feel more dangerous," said Alexandra, 33, who arrived in Zaporizhzhia late Wednesday after two weeks on the road.

Alexandra spoke on the condition that her last name be withheld for fear that her family could face reprisals from Russian forces. "My mother kept calling me, and she was begging us not to risk it," she recalled. But Alexandra feared the risks of staying even more.

In Kherson, rumors swirled that the city's men might be forced to join the fight against their Ukrainian countrymen, and Alexandra's husband, Vladimir, worried that would mean him. As the family waited at the Vasylivka checkpoint, the last in Russian-held territory, they saw a Ukrainian man from the eastern Luhansk region turned away by Russian soldiers.

"They told him to go back to Luhansk and join their army," Alexandra said. "We couldn't stay there on land that Russians stole. To us, it felt morally reprehensible."

The U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday overwhelmingly adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution condemning Russia's illegal annexation of territory and calling on Moscow to "immediately and unconditionally" reverse its annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

The vote — 143-5, with 35 abstentions — was nearly identical to that on a resolution in March condemning the invasion of Ukraine. Four of the five countries opposed — Russia, North Korea, Belarus and Syria — were the same. Eritrea, which last time voted no, abstained this time, while Nicaragua did the opposite.

Speaking before the vote Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the resolution was “important not just to the future of Ukraine and the future of Europe, but to the very foundations of this institution,” which, she said, was built on the idea “that never again would one country be allowed to take another’s territory by force.”

Meanwhile, Moscow’s security services announced the arrests of eight people — including five Russian citizens — in connection with an explosion that damaged the Crimean Bridge early Saturday.

In a statement, Russia’s security service, the FSB, accused Ukraine’s military intelligence service of coordinating what it called a “terrorist act.” The Ukrainian government has not claimed responsibility, though the bridge explosion was celebrated in Kyiv, and the Ukrainian Interior Ministry on Wednesday dismissed the FSB allegations as “nonsense.”

As night fell, though, civilians across Zaporizhzhia went to bed fearing that more revenge attacks would follow. “What else would you expect?” asked Luda, a retired teacher who spoke on the condition that her last name be withheld for fear of Russian reprisals, as she shepherded her children home for the night. “They’ve awakened a dragon. How can anyone sleep now?”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Russia officials, business elite despair</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/13/russian-elite-mood-war/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/13/russian-elite-mood-war/</a>
GIST	<p>When Vladimir Putin launched missile strikes targeting Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure this week, the move seemed to earn the Russian president a reprieve from hard-liners who had been demanding more decisive action.</p> <p>“Run, Zelensky, run,” cheered Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechen leader who has sent militias into Ukraine to fight in the war, referring to the Ukrainian president. Kadyrov declared himself to be “100 percent happy” with the conduct of the war after weeks of lambasting Russia’s military leadership over recent disastrous retreats.</p> <p>But some senior Russian officials and people within the business elite are drained and depressed — and the expectation is of a worsening political and economic climate. If Putin’s military escalation was partly aimed at putting the lid on turmoil bubbling up over the war’s mismanagement, then its impact may only be temporary, several officials and business executives said in interviews.</p> <p>“On the battlefield there are other problems,” said an influential Moscow businessman who, like others interviewed for this report, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of personal security fears. “I don’t think it will lift the pressure,” referring to the missile strikes.</p> <p>In addition, the business executives and officials said, even if the strikes succeed in damaging more of Ukraine’s electricity and energy networks with the fighting dragging on into the freezing winter, there are questions over how many missiles Russia has left and how long it can sustain a bombing campaign. The missiles “are being produced. But in single units. And the old reserves are running out,” one state official said.</p> <p>Ever since the Ukrainian army began recapturing swaths of territory in Ukraine’s south and east, Putin has been scrambling, forced to send hundreds of thousands of barely trained reservists to try to fortify Russia’s exhausted army — a move that sparked protests across Russia and sent at least 300,000 Russian men fleeing across the country’s borders to avoid the draft.</p> <p>As signs of <a href="#">discord within Putin’s inner circle</a> began to surface, Saturday’s humiliating attack on <a href="#">the Kremlin’s prized Kerch Bridge</a> to Crimea seemed the final straw.</p>

“No one is happy with the status quo,” the Russian state official said. “It is clear that a military or political victory will not be possible. But a loss is not possible either. This is turning into the situation in chess known as zugzwang, when each step is worse than the next and yet it is impossible not to move.”

The optimism of the summer when, according to a second state official, many in the country’s elite believed “we’ll turn everything around and find a way” has completely evaporated. “People see there is no future,” he said.

The forced mobilization has already dealt a blow to Putin’s popularity, one of the main bases for his legitimacy as president, and when the dead bodies of reservists begin to return from the front, the situation could worsen, the Moscow businessman said.

“In several months, there will be a very negative dynamic in Russia: a worsening of the mood in society,” he said. “Everything depends on the front.”

“Putin’s arsenal of possible action is very limited,” said Sergei Aleksashenko, a former deputy governor of the Russian Central Bank who is now living in exile in the United States. “Apart from striking civilian infrastructure, he only has the option of using a tactical nuclear weapon. If the Ukrainian counterattack continues, the question of what to do further remains in front of Putin.”

But few in Moscow say Putin will resort to deploying a tactical nuclear strike, despite the Kremlin’s statements, the Moscow businessman said, because “then he won’t have any cards left,” while China could block that kind of escalation. “This is a Pandora’s box [the Chinese] don’t want opened,” he said.

[Saudi Arabia’s support for oil production cuts this winter](#) seemed to have emboldened the Russian president, said the same Moscow executive, who maintains contacts with political officials. Even if energy prices remain at the same level, Putin “thinks Europe will be in crisis and will have no time for Ukraine.”

“This is still a war of attrition, until one side is not able to continue the war,” he said.

Gazprom’s chief executive, Alexei Miller, on Wednesday warned “entire cities” in Europe could freeze and said there were no guarantees Europe could survive the winter with the current levels of gas reserves.

Economists and business executives say sanctions are beginning to hit the Russian economy harder, with budget cuts already being imposed — while a proposed price cap to be levied by the Group of Seven nations on Russian oil sales from December would be a further blow. The Russian president “will run low on cash ... He needs cash to pay Iran and North Korea for weapons. But we will see in December a completely new reality,” said Sergei Guriev, the provost at the Sciences Po university in Paris.

Amid expectations of more and tougher sanctions, every piece of bad news from the front line is a new blow for the Russian economy, a second member of the Moscow business elite said.

“All of business is suffering from what’s happening. Everyone has frozen their investment plans,” he said. The previous belief that Russia could redirect trade flows away from the West through China, Kazakhstan and India is fast melting away, two of the business executives said. Kazakhstan has begun to block cargoes carrying European goods into Russia, while the Chinese were beginning to stop certain supplies, too.

“Everyone is completely frustrated. The mood is very bad,” a third senior Russian businessman said. Members of Moscow’s elite are beginning to speak about potential leadership change in a way they have never done before in more than 20 years of Putin’s rule — though no one can say how or when this might happen.

“We have begun entering a revolutionary situation,” the first state official said. “Everyone is waiting for something other than what is happening now: a different leadership, a different war. The hawks want tougher action. The doves want no war at all. The time for a change of the political system is ripening. But how it will happen, I don’t know.”

HEADLINE	10/12 China's troubled Covid testing strategy
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/briefing/china-covid-test-biden-russia-myanmar.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/briefing/china-covid-test-biden-russia-myanmar.html</a> <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/business/china-covid-testing.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/business/china-covid-testing.html</a>
GIST	<p>Testing every citizen for the coronavirus several times a week became central to China's "zero-Covid" strategy earlier this year, when a stubborn strain of the coronavirus rippled through the country.</p> <p>But that approach has failed to slow some of China's biggest outbreaks, and the <a href="#">program appears to be foundering</a> as the country prepares for a politically important Communist Party congress.</p> <p>Nearly 200 million people are in some form of lockdown in China, and the punishment for failing to comply with burdensome testing requirements has grown more severe. The police have detained people, sometimes for more than a week, for skipping mandated tests.</p> <p>The testing program has also created great financial strain. The Bank of China Research Institute estimated that regular mass testing would cost nearly \$100 billion a year if 900 million people were tested every three days. And the government, which funds most of the testing, has shown signs that it is struggling to pay for it.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> China's ability to find and isolate cases used to be the pride of its pandemic strategy. While countries around the world saw hospitals reach capacity, China's Covid-19 numbers remained low, and the economy kept humming. Now, the economy is slowing and frustration is rising.</p> <hr/> <p>As a stubborn strain of Covid-19 rippled through China this year and forced hundreds of millions of people into lockdown, officials turned to a new tool: regular <a href="#">mass P.C.R. testing</a>. By testing every citizen several times a week, the authorities hoped to isolate cases more quickly and avoid future crippling lockdowns.</p> <p>But in recent months that approach has failed to slow some of <a href="#">China's biggest outbreaks</a>. Now, with the politically important Communist Party congress just days away, the mass testing program that has become the cornerstone of <a href="#">China's "zero-Covid" strategy</a> appears to be foundering, even as it remains a fixture of the country's urban landscape and balloons into a multibillion-dollar business.</p> <p>Desperate to isolate recent outbreaks, health workers have resorted to barricading buildings and even cordoning off single individuals in public spaces. Nearly two hundred million people are in some form of lockdown in China. In every village, town and city, testing requirements have become more burdensome and the punishments for failing to comply more severe.</p> <p>Yet with the testing apparatus growing bigger and bigger, the resources to support it have come under more financial strain, and the government, which funds most of the testing, has shown signs that it is struggling to pay up.</p> <p>The mass testing strategy in China — which has <a href="#">yet to approve an mRNA vaccine</a> — began in May with an order for cities with more than 10 million people to do regular testing and provide testing facilities within a 15-minute walk of anywhere in the city. Overnight, tens of thousands of testing booths popped up in cities like Shanghai and Beijing.</p> <p>Blythe Dai said she gets tested for the coronavirus as frequently as possible. Her grandmother was recently dying in the hospital, but Ms. Dai wasn't allowed to see her because her 48-hour negative P.C.R. test had expired.</p>

“Covid is not so scary,” said Ms. Dai, a 30-year-old resident in Shanghai. Instead, she said, it is the emotional cost that she and others have to pay. “We have sacrificed too much to control the epidemic,” she said.

For smaller local governments already under pressure to stimulate a slowing economy, building a testing network as large of those found in Shanghai and Beijing has created a huge financial strain.

Local authorities in [provinces such as Shanxi](#) and [Jiangxi have already](#) diverted money from public projects in order to fund pandemic monitoring and control. In some cities, civil servants have faced pay cuts. In others, bonuses for officials have been frozen to help prop up testing.

And yet there are signs from some of China’s biggest testing companies that there is a cash shortfall.

Dian Diagnostics said this summer that the amount of money it was still owed in payments had nearly doubled over the past year and warned of the “risk of bad debts.” Shanghai Runda Medical Technology recently said unpaid bills had increased by a quarter over the same period. Guangzhou Kingmed Diagnostics warned that delays in payments could raise its risk profile.

“There is a serious imbalance between local government revenue and expenditure,” analysts at the Bank of China Research Institute wrote in a note to clients in late September. They estimated that regular mass testing would cost nearly \$100 billion a year if 900 million people were tested every three days.

Cases continue to rise as these financial pressures mount. Last week, a top official in the Xinjiang region, Liu Sushe, made a rare admission of defeat when he said, “We have not been able to achieve dynamic zero Covid for more than two months,” citing the “ineffectiveness of our control measures.”

While the testing measures are proving to be less effective, the industry continues to make huge profits. Bigger companies like Dian Diagnostics have reported revenues that more than doubled over the first six months of this year, said Jialin Zhang, head of China health care research at the Japanese bank Nomura.

For Chinese citizens like Chen Yaya, these riches have come to symbolize the futility of Beijing’s zero-Covid policy.

Ms. Chen, a Shanghai resident, said she was quietly protesting the city’s testing requirements by refusing to get swabbed more than once a week, as required. She organizes her schedule so that she does her grocery shopping and sees friends within the first 72 hours after her weekly test. By limiting the number of tests she gets, she’s hoping to avoid lining the pockets of testing companies and her chances of being swept into a lockdown.

“Reducing the profits of testing companies is only a superficial reason” to avoid testing, Ms. Chen said. She is mostly concerned that she will be caught in a lockdown or sent to a government isolation facility if she tests positive. “That’s why I try to do as little as possible.”

To force people to submit to the swab, the authorities have reached for more punitive measures. In the south, north and east of China, the police have detained people for days for skipping P.C.R. tests, sometimes locking them up for more than a week.

There was a time when China’s ability to find and isolate cases was considered the crown jewel of its pandemic strategy. While countries around the world saw infections soar and hospitals reach capacity, China’s Covid numbers remained low, allowing officials in Beijing to relish in their success handling the virus while Chinese consumers kept the economy humming.

But the new, near-daily testing regime meant to combat stubborn variants is being met with growing frustration as the true costs of sustaining such a program become more clear. For gig workers who get paid only by the order, for example, waiting in line for a test can mean lost wages.

For people like Haily Zhao, who gets swabbed every 72 hours as required by the authorities in Beijing, testing cuts into the time she needs to decompress after work. “It’s not, ‘I can do whatever I want as long as I’m doing P.C.R. testing,’” said Ms. Zhao, 26. “It’s, ‘Whatever I’m doing or want to do, I have to do a P.C.R. test first.’”

When one conference recently used the tagline “The age of P.C.R. prosperity” in its marketing material, the backlash was so swift that the organizers had to cancel the event and later clarified it was not meant to promote P.C.R. testing. “Some people are rubbing salt in the wounds of those who are suffering,” one commenter wrote of the conference online.

Even some of the workers who swab throats and noses and process test results have lost enthusiasm for the country’s testing protocols. Before China’s mass testing mandate, there were 153,000 people employed as testers and hundreds of thousands of Communist Party member volunteers ready to help fight the coronavirus.

But the job is tiring and pays little. While a lab technician can make as much as \$4,250 a month, advertisements for swabbing jobs offer something closer to \$1,000.

“It’s a boring, tedious, repetitive, mechanical job,” said Hu Shixin, a college student in the eastern city of Nanjing. Mr. Hu volunteered for two weeks in August to help with testing in the industrial city of Taiyuan as part of a youth Communist Party program. Dressed in a sweaty protective suit, he scanned ID cards and handed out the P.C.R. testing tubes.

Other community and medical workers sometimes cut corners and pretended to test people without taking samples, Mr. Hu said. “Maybe they don’t think that doing the P.C.R. test is so necessary,” he added. “For them, doing P.C.R. testing is just a job.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 China’s Covid politics</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/briefing/chinas-covid-politics.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/briefing/chinas-covid-politics.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Communist Party congress in China — where Xi Jinping is expected to be named to a third five-year term as the country’s top leader — is just days away. It comes as China faces <a href="#">an economic slowdown</a> and <a href="#">its largest flare-up of Covid cases in a month</a>.</p> <p>More than 130 cities across nearly every province in China have reported cases, and nearly 200 million people in the country are currently in some form of lockdown as part of <a href="#">the country’s zero-tolerance approach to Covid-19</a>. And there are signs that the country’s enormous and expensive testing regime, a cornerstone of the zero-tolerance approach, <a href="#">is coming under strain</a>.</p> <p>Ahead of the congress on Sunday, I spoke to my colleague Keith Bradsher, the Beijing bureau chief.</p> <p><b>How is the party congress shaping up?</b></p> <p>China is already turning Beijing into a kind of Covid island for the party congress. In the last week, it has become extraordinarily difficult to enter the city. China tracks residents’ P.C.R. tests and other health indicators with an app on residents’ smartphones, and getting into any building or traveling requires showing that your health code is still green. But recently, residents of a very wide range of cities across the country have found that their health codes turn red or they receive a pop-up warning if they try to take a train or plane to Beijing.</p> <p><b>How will they be framing the Covid question at the Congress?</b></p> <p>Xi Jinping has framed the Covid question as a story of China putting its people’s health first ahead of anything else, including sometimes even economic growth. The Communist Party is presenting itself as one of the few organizations on Earth that have managed to shield a country’s people from widespread illness and deaths during the pandemic. And that portrayal of China’s Covid-zero policies as a success is likely to endure at the party congress.</p>



Also important is that China has very little to worry about so far regarding long Covid. The U.S. has many millions of people who face lasting health problems, and that is an important cause of human suffering, as well as high costs for the health care system and lost productivity for the economy for a long time to come. In China, you scarcely hear of long Covid because few people have been infected yet.

**Will the congress give us any hints about what comes next for China's Covid policy?**

The drumbeat of statements in state media this week, reaffirming China's response to Covid, makes it unlikely the policy will change quickly. We are much more likely to hear of Covid zero as a success story with only the vaguest of mentions that there may be efforts to further improve the handling in the months to come.

Party congresses are not an occasion for specific health policies. They are an occasion for the broadest of ideological statements, as well as for chest-thumping affirmations of national strength. We might eventually see incremental changes, however.

**When?**

For a real easing of restrictions, the political calendar and the public health calendar actually might match up rather well next spring and summer. That's when there tend to be fewer respiratory illnesses. And we are at the beginning of a very important political season in China that starts now, with a new Politburo named by the end of this month, and continues through mid-March, when a new cabinet will be named to oversee government ministries. Trying to change direction significantly on public health in the middle of that would really be a challenge.

The other worry is that vaccination has really petered out here.

**How so?**

At the peak, a year ago, China was doing 20 million to 30 million vaccines a day, and now it's a couple of million. A big chunk of the population has not had a vaccine in the past six months. And yet, with fewer than a million confirmed infections in the past three years, almost nobody has developed the antibodies from an illness, either. On top of that, China has refused to allow the import of foreign mRNA vaccines that have been proved in other countries to be far more effective than the older-technology Chinese vaccines.

So the result is that you have a mostly unprotected population. If they want to open up, at a minimum they need to do a lot of vaccination. But they face, as in many places in the West, very strong public resistance and skepticism of vaccination.

**If the Chinese government can shut down cities and force people to be tested, can't they force people to get vaccines?**

Public opinion does count for something in China. And there is a lot of hesitancy about vaccines here. One reason is that China had a couple of scandals in the past decade preceding Covid involving routinely administered vaccines that were out of date or even contaminated. And that has produced a lingering suspicion.

On top of that, when China first introduced its Covid vaccines in late 2020, it told older adults to be careful about getting these new, initially experimental vaccines, which created considerable vaccine hesitancy among that group.

The city of Beijing a while back tried to start requiring that people be vaccinated in order to enter certain public venues. And they had to abandon the policy within a couple of days because of pushback from the general public.

**Have there been any changes to China's zero-Covid approach?**

There has not been that much change, and in the past couple days there has been an apparently coordinated barrage of articles in state media asserting that Covid-zero measures had worked. China continues to lock

down entire cities, as they did a few weeks ago in Chengdu, a city with a population of 21 million. One city that had a single case but is now entirely locked down is Fenyang. China's willingness to lock down an entire city because of a single case shows how seriously they're taking this.

But there have been a few tweaks at the margin. The most conspicuous has been to allow a modest increase in the number of international flights coming into the country and to shorten the government-run quarantine for people coming into the country.

#### **Could China keep the policy in place?**

Yes, but China is under a lot of economic pressure right now. Lightening up some more on Covid restrictions, so that people could at least walk out their front doors, would be a big step toward helping consumer spending on services. And prolonged economic weakness in China could really create problems in a lot of places outside of China as well.

For example, it could hurt a lot of blue-collar communities in the West. It is hard for factories in Europe and the U.S. to compete with Chinese factories right now, because when Chinese factories have weak demand in their home market, they sell overseas at whatever low prices they can get, just to keep the factory gates open and keep the workers employed.

China's economic weakness is making worse another big problem, which is the plight of developing countries. China is the main export market for a majority of the world's developing countries now, as China buys vast quantities of commodities. And as long as the Chinese economy is weak, that's going to hurt a lot of developing countries.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Protests in Iran spread despite crackdown</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/middleeast/iran-women-protests-strike.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/middleeast/iran-women-protests-strike.html</a>
GIST	<p>Defying a lethal crackdown in cities across Iran, protesters demanding the ouster of Iran's Islamic Republic have driven their uprising into a fourth week, with workers from the country's vital oil sector going on strike this week and activists calling for further work stoppages and protests on Wednesday.</p> <p>Despite efforts by Iran's security forces, including the feared plainclothes Basij militias, to crush the protests, they have only widened. Some have turned into chaotic street battles, with the security forces opening fire and protesters fighting back and refusing to give ground, according to witnesses, rights groups and videos of the clashes on social media.</p> <p>The internet and popular communications applications in Iran have been disrupted for weeks, making it difficult to confirm the true toll of the government's crackdown on the protests, which have been led and inspired by women from their start in mid-September. But human rights groups said Tuesday that at least 185 people had been killed, including 28 children, with thousands injured or arrested so far. The government said that 24 of its security forces had been killed and about 2,000 wounded.</p> <p>The protests were sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police after they arrested her under the country's rule requiring women to wear dress modestly and cover their hair in public. Iran's security forces claimed she died of a heart attack, but her family said she had been killed by blows to her head and was healthy at the time of her arrest.</p> <p>The government's violent crackdown has been intense in many cities across the country, and in recent weeks it has escalated in the Kurdish region where Ms. Amini lived and the protests began.</p> <p>One city there, Sanandaj, about 250 miles from Tehran, came under intense fire over the weekend, according to residents, rights groups and videos posted on social media. Security forces indiscriminately opened fire on residents and homes and threw tear gas into residential buildings, killing at least seven people and injuring more than 400, according to the Kurdish rights group Hengaw.</p>

Since the protests began in September, two teenage girls have joined Ms. Amini as the faces of the uprising, appearing on posters and street art across the country, their names chanted as rallying cries and trending on Persian-language Twitter. The girls — [Nika Shakarami](#) and [Sarina Esmailzadeh](#), both 16 but from different towns — went missing after they joined the protests in September, their families only learning their fates after the authorities suddenly returned their bodies.

The government claimed that the girls had killed themselves by jumping from buildings. But family members immediately rejected those accusations, telling the media and human rights groups that the girls had been beaten to death.

Last week, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, broke weeks of silence over the protests, accusing the United States and Israel of aiding the demonstrators, and voicing support for the security forces' actions.

But [scenes like those this month at the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran](#) — Iran's most elite academic institution, where the authorities shot rubber bullets into crowds of young people and beat and arrested dozens, according to witnesses — have reverberated, outraging even some Iranians who had formerly supported the revolutionary government.

Iran has been rocked by nationwide protest movements before, most notably over contested election results in 2009, and over the economy in 2017 and 2019. Those also brought a swift and deadly reaction from the authorities.

But the current uprising has not only been able to survive weeks of crackdown attempts; it has also grown and taken a tone directly threatening the country's theocratic leadership, with women burning their hijabs, campuses erupting into protest, and marchers chanting "Death to the dictator!" and "We don't want an Islamic republic!"

Now nearing the month mark, the protests have taken on a rhythm. Larger demonstrations erupt across the nation every few days, including one this past Saturday. Those have been backed by smaller neighborhood-scale protests nearly every day, and by widespread daily acts of civil disobedience, including women walking with their hair uncovered, shops closing, and people chanting against the regime nightly from rooftops and open windows.

Activists called for another nationwide protest on Wednesday, and called for workers and businesses to join.

More professionals have been answering the call recently. Saeed Dehghan, a prominent lawyer, said a group of lawyers planned to stage a protest outside the judiciary building in Tehran on Wednesday to denounce "the state violating the rights of the people."

The country's main medical association issued a statement on Tuesday signed by 800 physicians condemning the violence and stating that they consider "the people as the real owners of the country, and we support their just demands."

Workers in the oil and energy sector have staged strikes for two days. On Monday, workers from the Abadan and Kangan oil refineries and the Bushehr Petrochemical Project in Asaluyeh went on strike, and a video showed the workers in Asaluyeh blocking a road and chanting "Death to the dictator!" Eleven workers were arrested on Tuesday, but the walkouts continued, according to media reports, and more were expected on Wednesday.

Strikes that could further damage the economy, particularly those called by the unions representing the bazaar merchants and the oil and energy sector, carry a heavy weight in Iran's history. During the 1979 Islamic revolution, strikes in those sectors were a powerful tool that accelerated the Shah's collapse.

Amnesty International and rights groups sounded the alarm on Tuesday about the violence unfolding in Sanandaj, the city in the Kurdish region, which has a strong tradition of civil society and organized opposition parties.

Rebin Rahmani, director of the France-based Kurdistan Human Rights Network, said that it had identified four demonstrators killed by security forces in Sanandaj since the protests began, including a man in his 20s who was shot in his car by a plainclothes security officer.

Videos posted on social media and supported by witness accounts were said to show the security forces standing in the middle of a road in broad daylight in Sanandaj, shooting at crowds. At night, people barricaded the streets with debris and bonfires, and fought back by throwing bricks at the security forces. One video appeared to show the forces lining up on an empty street at night and firing at the windows of homes.

Haider, a resident of Sanandaj in his 20s who works in sales and marketing and asked to only be identified by his middle name out of fear of retribution, told The New York Times that he had heard gunfire and the sound of protesters from his balcony on Saturday and Sunday night. “We were shocked, they were trying to kill people,” he said. When he and his family left for a farm just outside the city on Monday, they saw surveillance drones overhead, he said.

Iran’s interior minister, Ahmad Vahidi, traveled to Sanandaj on Tuesday and said in a speech that those protesting in the city were “the enemy of the Iranian nation,” according to Iran’s official media. The sound of gunfire continued even as the minister toured the city.

In Qom, a religious city that has traditionally been a power base for the state, young protesters blocked the streets and chanted for the downfall of Ayatollah Khamenei, videos on social media showed.

“We need to live in freedom!” said Haider, the Sanandaj resident. He said a friend of his had lost an eye after being shot by pellets. “The government shouldn’t choose what we wear or what we hear.”

The official response has mostly been dismissive. President Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday compared protesters to flies and labeled them enemies during a speech at a university campus. Afterward, university demonstrations took on a new chant: “Raisi, get lost!”

The head of the country’s judiciary, the hard-line cleric Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei, has played a central role in the crackdown on protesters, officials say. But on Sunday, he appeared to be attempting damage control, saying that he was ready for dialogue with protesters and that the government was willing to make “corrections” to policies.

But many Iranians viewed Mr. Mohseni Ejei’s gesture as insincere, and instead took it as a sign that the state was realizing that crackdowns alone might not resolve the current crisis.

The government is also facing increasingly vocal criticism for its handling of the crisis from its power base, including some conservative politicians. Mohammad Sadr, a member of the powerful Expediency Council that advises the supreme leader and has oversight over the government, said on Tuesday that Ms. Amini’s death had ignited “pent-up frustrations, demands and rage especially among the young generation,” and added that “you cannot rule by force.”

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HEADLINE	10/13 Germany’s new hunger for coal
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/13/world/europe/germany-coal-energy-climate.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/13/world/europe/germany-coal-energy-climate.html</a>
GIST	LÜTZERATH, Germany — For months, die-hard environmental activists have camped in the fields and occupied the trees in this tiny farming village in western Germany, hoping that like-minded people from across the country would arrive and help stop the expansion of a nearby open-pit coal mine that threatened to swallow the village and its farms.

They had reason to be optimistic. Mass protests led the German government to step in and save an old-growth forest from coal expansion just two years ago. And the Green party notched its best showing ever in elections last year, a sign of how fighting climate change had become a winning political issue in Europe's largest economy.

"If there were 50,000 on the street, politicians would have to do something," said Eckardt Heukamp, 58, the last farmer remaining in Lützerath, who put up some of the protesters in apartments on his property. Others built tree houses, pitched tents or moved into abandoned houses in the village.

But the hoped-for surge in protesters never materialized. And last week, the government effectively sealed Lützerath's fate by announcing that RWE, Germany's largest energy company, needed the coal under the village — to make up for gas that had stopped flowing in from Russia.

The war in Ukraine, and the looming prospect of a winter without cheap Russian fuel, has cooled enthusiasm in Germany for greener policies, at least for now. In a nation that has pledged to wean itself off coal entirely by 2030, it has been an abrupt retreat — and for some, a difficult one.

"Putin's war of aggression is forcing us to temporarily make greater use of lignite so that we save gas in electricity generation," said Robert Habeck, the German economy minister and a former leader of the Green party, referring to the low-grade coal under the village. "This is painful but necessary in view of the gas shortage."

Russia once supplied more than half of Germany's gas imports — a major source of fuel for heating. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine set off a chain reaction of European sanctions and Russian countermeasures, that flow was shut off. From the start of the war, the German government knew it would have to scramble for fuel to get through the coming winter.

In June, Mr. Habeck announced the reopening of some coal plants — a bitter pill after the Greens' success, just months earlier, at getting the new government to speed up its exit from coal by eight years. When a drought this summer compounded energy jitters by slowing coal transport on rivers, the government gave cargo trains carrying coal and other fuels priority over passenger ones.

And yet so far, there has been little public backlash.

A poll taken this summer found that 56 percent of Germans were in favor of turning coal plants back on, with just 36 percent against. That compares to the 73 percent of the population who supported ending coal use "as soon as possible" in a 2019 poll.

Part of the reason for the lack of protesters in Lützerath may have been wariness among many about taking on a losing battle.

"We're hearing from many that they simply can't face it," said Cornelia Senne, a theologian who recently led an overnight church service outside Mr. Heukamp's front door. "With all that's going on, some people cannot bear to watch another catastrophe unfold."

Though tens of thousands of climate activists marched in cities across Germany in late September, they focused their demands mainly on issues like climate justice for developing countries and accessible public transport — not the end of coal in Germany.

Since the crisis began, Germany has seen a nearly 5 percent rise in coal-generated electricity. Coal currently accounts for nearly a third of all electricity made in Germany.

Much of that coal comes from places like the Garzweiler mine near Lützerath, which is owned by RWE and where some of the world's biggest digging machines continuously work the sprawling 12-square-mile pit.

For decades, when coal was a way of life in much of Germany, residents of communities like Lützerath accepted the inevitability of coal mining, including a legal requirement to move and make way when state governments struck deals with energy companies like RWE. Since World War II, some 300 German villages have been razed for the coal beneath them.

But activists had hoped to draw the line in Lützerath, once a village of about 90 people, and make the fight to save it a cause célèbre. Even if they failed, it seemed, the town might be the last German village to be wiped out for coal mining.

Even many climate activists concede that Germany will need to use more so-called “hard” coal this winter. But they insist that does not justify the demolition of Lützerath, which sits above deposits of lignite, the more polluting, softer variety.

“We are in a schizophrenic situation: We are going for a 2030 exit, but we are still allowing RWE to go for lignite in Lützerath,” said Karsten Smid, a German climate and energy campaigner at Greenpeace. “If you are doing this for the energy crisis, you don’t need Lützerath’s coal.”

Calculations by energy experts published in August suggested that the coal under Lützerath is actually not needed even with a short-term increase in demand this winter.

German officials, however, suggest that any increase in coal emissions will be offset by the fact that RWE has agreed to the 2030 deadline for an end to coal use.

While emissions from coal will likely increase this winter, Andrzej Ancygier, a Berlin-based analyst at Climate Analytics, says it is too early to know by how much.

“At this point crunching the numbers doesn’t make sense yet, because there are just too many factors,” said Mr. Ancygier, citing weather conditions and the question of when France will be able to reactivate its huge fleet of nuclear power plants and begin exporting the electricity they generate to Germany.

Mr. Ancygier said changes to rules on burning coal will not affect Germany’s long-term progress on renewable energy, which he predicts will continue to make up an ever-bigger portion of Germany’s power mix. German lawmakers agreed to a new set of rules in July promoting renewables by making them more lucrative for smaller producers.

But small and medium-sized businesses worry they will be facing bankruptcy before they can make it to warmer weather, and households are preparing for power outages if the winter is exceptionally cold.

The protesters in Lützerath — balaclava-clad environmental activists, middle-class residents from nearby towns and a religious community that recently carried a cross around the village — say they are exhausted by their efforts but plan to keep fighting.

One activist, who refused to take off his white face covering or give his real name out of fear of legal retribution, has lived in a treehouse in Lützerath since the spring, and said he was prepared for a showdown with the police when the bulldozers finally come.

Even with the sound of the mining machines in the distance, Mr. Heukamp had stubbornly refused to give in, planting crops in the spring and harvesting in the summer and fall. He harvested the last of this season’s wheat in August.

But at the beginning of this month, Mr. Heukamp finally gave up, packing up his equipment and abandoning his family farm.

Blaming state politics for the decision to go ahead with the destruction of his farm, he said: “If they had wanted to save this village, they could have done it.”



	RWE has not said when the bulldozers will move in to level the farm Mr. Heukamp left behind.
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Russia: 8 arrests for Crimea bridge blast</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/crimea-bridge-russia-arrests.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/crimea-bridge-russia-arrests.html</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Russia’s domestic intelligence service announced the arrest of eight people on Wednesday in connection with the weekend bombing of the bridge linking Russia to the occupied Crimean Peninsula. Five are citizens of Russia, according to the agency, the F.S.B., and the others are Ukrainian and Armenian.</p> <p>President Vladimir V. Putin has blamed Ukraine for the blast, which he called a “terrorist attack,” and retaliated with a barrage of missile strikes against civilian targets in Ukraine this week, killing more than 20 people.</p> <p>In a statement, the F.S.B. offered Russia’s first detailed version of how it contends the blast took place. It said that the bomb had contained 22 tons of explosives that were shipped out of a port in Odesa, in southern Ukraine, in August. The explosives made their way to southern Russia, where they were loaded onto a truck that was driven onto the bridge and detonated, it said.</p> <p>The details could not be independently confirmed. Russia maintains an effective blockade on the ports of Odesa, permitting only grain ships, inspected by international monitors, to leave under a deal brokered this summer by the United Nations.</p> <p>The F.S.B., as Russia’s premier domestic intelligence service, has primary responsibility for security on the bridge. The bombing represented a profound lapse in the agency’s oversight, even as Ukrainian officials telegraphed for months their intentions to strike the structure.</p> <p>The F.S.B. said Ukraine’s military intelligence service, the G.U.R., had masterminded the blast, saying that the agency’s commander, Gen. Kyrylo Budanov, bore personal responsibility. A senior Ukrainian official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of a government prohibition against discussing the episode, confirmed that Ukraine’s intelligence services had carried it out, and other senior officials have not denied Ukraine’s role.</p> <p>But Ukraine’s government has not officially claimed responsibility for the explosion, and a spokesman for the G.U.R. dismissed the Russian assertions as “nonsense.”</p> <p>The F.S.B. and Russia’s main investigative committee “are fake structures serving the Putin regime, and so we will certainly not be commenting on their latest statement,” said Andrei Yusov, the G.U.R. spokesman.</p> <p>The Crimea explosion, just after 6 a.m. on Saturday, was both a strategic and symbolic attack. The bridge is the sole link between Russia and Crimea, and a symbol for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia of one of his greatest triumphs as leader: the illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. The force of the blast sent a large chunk of the bridge tumbling into the sea and set fire to a train pulling fuel that was passing on a parallel railroad bridge.</p> <p>The bridge is also the primary supply route for fuel and heavy equipment for Russia’s troops fighting in southern Ukraine. Any disruption to the structure would hinder Russian forces’ ability to fight at a time when Ukraine’s military is pushing deeper into territory taken by Russia at the start of the war.</p> <p>The F.S.B.’s claims regarding the bomb’s size strain credulity, given the history of improvised explosive devices used in recent armed conflicts. During the American occupation of Iraq, the largest improvised bombs commonly made by insurgents were those placed in dump trucks, carrying approximately five tons of homemade explosives.</p>

	<p>The most powerful non-nuclear air-dropped bomb used by the United States military — the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, or MOAB — contains the equivalent power of just over nine tons of TNT. At 30 feet long and more than three feet in diameter, a MOAB can only be dropped from military cargo planes. The Pentagon has disclosed only a single use of the MOAB by U.S. forces in combat, during a 2017 attack on a suspected insurgent cave complex in <a href="#">Afghanistan</a>.</p> <p>Twenty-two tons is more than double the maximum capacity of most dump trucks. It appeared that Russia’s intelligence services were offering an estimate based on the loading limits for standardized 20-foot or 40-foot shipping containers, which are usually carried by tractor-trailers. In <a href="#">videos captured at the time of the blast</a>, the truck that was detonated on the Kerch Strait Bridge did not appear to be carrying such a shipping container.</p> <p>The F.S.B. identified the driver of the truck as Makhir Yusubov, born in 1971. The senior Ukrainian official said it was likely that the truck’s driver had died in the blast, though it was not clear whether he was aware that the truck was carrying a bomb.</p> <p>Shortly after the explosion, a man claiming to be Mr. Yusubov’s nephew gave an interview to a Russian news outlet claiming to be the owner of the truck, but denying that he had any knowledge about a plot to blow up the bridge.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Lufthansa clarifies: baggage AirTags okay</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/travel/lufthansa-apple-airtags-luggage.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/travel/lufthansa-apple-airtags-luggage.html</a>
GIST	<p>The German airline Lufthansa reversed itself on Wednesday, saying that Apple AirTags and other Bluetooth tracking devices would once again be allowed in checked baggage.</p> <p>“The German Aviation Authorities (Luftfahrt-Bundesamt) confirmed today, that they share our risk assessment that tracking devices with very low battery and transmission power in checked luggage do not pose a safety risk,” the airline said. “With that these devices are allowed on Lufthansa flights.”</p> <p><a href="#">The airline had set off a storm of confusion</a> and criticism after telling passengers that they would have to deactivate the trackers in baggage stowed in cargo holds because of international guidelines for personal electronic devices.</p> <p>Apple had rejected that interpretation on Tuesday, saying its trackers comply with all airline safety regulations.</p> <p>In the United States, that was confirmed by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency said that its regulation did “not in itself ban or allow” the trackers, but that operators had the right to determine which devices were safe to use in flight.</p> <p>It appears Lufthansa sought advice from German aviation authorities. Martin Leutke, a spokesman for the airline, said Wednesday that he had no further comment about the company’s statement, <a href="#">first released on Twitter</a>.</p> <p>Lufthansa found its policy under fire when reports surfaced <a href="#">in the German news media</a> that it had prohibited the devices, <a href="#">amid speculation that the airline had been embarrassed</a> by reports of passengers using the devices to find baggage it had lost.</p> <p>Lufthansa had <a href="#">confirmed Sunday</a> on Twitter that it believed the trackers must be deactivated in checked baggage on its flights, citing the International Civil Aviation Organization’s guidelines for dangerous goods as well as the trackers’ “transmission function.” Shutting off the trackers renders them useless.</p>

On Tuesday, [it tried to clarify](#) its position, with Mr. Leutke saying the airline had not banned the devices and believed they were safe but that “it is on the authorities to adapt regulations, that right now limit the use of these devices for airline passengers in checked luggage.”

Regulators in the United States have said the trackers, which use Bluetooth technology and do not interfere with the airplanes’ communications equipment, are permitted in carry-on or checked baggage. A variety of other companies sell similar trackers, [including Tile, which is popular with users of Android phones.](#)

In its statement, Apple said that AirTags are “compliant with international airline travel safety regulations for carry-on and checked baggage.”

The devices use Bluetooth Low Energy, the same technology commonly used by wireless headphones, which are permitted on flights. They are tracked by sharing their last location via a secure signal to nearby Apple devices.

Apple said I.C.A.O. does not have specific standards for cargo tracking devices, and its definition of personal consumer electronic devices is focused on larger devices, including phones, cameras and laptops. These tend to have larger lithium batteries.

The aviation organization itself said Tuesday that it is not a regulator and “does not play an oversight role” over the airlines. Rather, its guidelines on what passengers may and may not do, and similar advice from the international trade group, trickle down to the regulators and airlines, which set policy.

Apple said AirTags use CR2032 coin cell batteries, which are commonly used in watches and key fobs. Apple said those batteries have been approved for all baggage by the Federal Aviation Administration, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and the International Air Transport Association, an airlines trade group.

An [F.A.A. advisory from 2017 allows devices](#) to use low-powered wireless communication like Bluetooth on board planes in the United States. In a statement on Monday, the Transportation Security Administration confirmed Apple’s view that “tracking devices are allowed in both carry-on and checked bags.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Strategy: China challenge, Russia threat</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/joe-biden-national-security-strategy-lays-out-chin/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/joe-biden-national-security-strategy-lays-out-chin/</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. has entered a “decisive decade” in the fight for a free and open global society, the Biden administration said in a major policy document released Wednesday, sketching out the immediate military threats posed by a brazen, aggressive Russia and a longer-term strategic, economic and geopolitical showdown with rising superpower China.</p> <p>The White House’s long-awaited National Security Strategy (NSS), originally due out in the spring but delayed after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February, lays out a broad road map for American leadership and international cooperation in an era of war, deadly pandemics, a changing climate and burning questions about the viability of Western-style democracy in the 21st century. The 48-page report broke little new ground from a policy perspective but crystallized President Biden’s view of U.S. leadership in the coming years, which look to be among the most tumultuous and violent the world has seen since World War II.</p> <p>China and Russia have said they are pushing for the end of a “unipolar” world dominated by Washington and its allies. Mr. Biden made clear that the U.S. is ready to meet the challenge.</p> <p>“Around the world, the need for American leadership is as great as it has ever been. We are in the midst of a strategic competition to shape the future of the international order,” Mr. Biden said in the opening pages of the NSS. “Meanwhile, shared challenges that impact people everywhere demand increased global</p>

cooperation and nations stepping up to their responsibilities at a moment when this has become more difficult.

“In response,” he continued, “the United States will lead with our values, and we will work in lockstep with our allies and partners and with all those who share our interests. We will not leave our future vulnerable to the whims of those who do not share our vision for a world that is free, open, prosperous and secure.”

With the midterm elections looming, the Biden administration’s NSS sought to link the “transnational” challenges facing the planet — climate change, energy costs, inflation and pandemic diseases — with the struggles confronted by Americans at home.

“They are at the very core of national and international security and must be treated as such,” the document says.

The administration dedicates much of the NSS to detailing how the U.S. must lead on those issues in the years and decades to come, arguing that Washington must make deep investments in infrastructure and economic programs at home to maintain its “competitive edge” and maintain its status as a world leader. It also stressed the need to work with competitors such as China on issues like climate change, even while it competes with Beijing in the economic realm and maintains a military advantage over the communist regime.

Critics said the strategy missed the mark by zeroing in on climate change and other nonmilitary issues rather than focusing more heavily on hard questions of national security and the need to beef up the U.S. military.

“The president’s National Security Strategy — meant to guide the administration’s efforts to counter pressing external dangers — is comprised of a litany of the administration’s accomplishments and a recitation of progressive domestic issues, packaged as threats to the security of the United States,” said retired Army Gen. Tom Spoeher, director of the Center for National Defense at the conservative Heritage Foundation. “If Americans were looking for a National Security Strategy capable of guiding the nation’s security efforts for the next two years, they will be sorely disappointed by this document.”

#### Global threats

The NSS does sound an urgent tone when describing the two main threats facing the U.S. and its allies.

While the Biden administration’s broad policy points remain mostly the same, the unfolding war in Ukraine — and Russia’s failures to achieve its most significant objectives in the nearly 8-month-old conflict — clearly shaped the overall tone and tenor of the document.

Previously grouped together in White House and Pentagon papers laying out a future of “great-power competition,” Russia and China are largely addressed separately in the latest NSS. The document seems to consider Russia less of a direct military challenger than China and certainly not an equal adversary to the U.S., though it makes clear that Moscow’s willingness to launch an unprovoked war on its neighbor has made for a dramatically more dangerous world.

Speaking to reporters on a conference call Wednesday morning, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan seemed to indicate that the administration expected Russia to achieve more success in its Ukraine invasion. Instead, Ukrainian troops armed with U.S.-made weapons have wreaked havoc on a bumbling Russian military, and those Ukrainian forces over the past several weeks have recaptured huge swaths of territory in the country’s east amid growing frustration in the Kremlin and across Russian society with the war effort.

“Frankly, in February, there were a whole lot of people who thought the war would be over rapidly and Russia would be in a much better position than it is in today,” Mr. Sullivan said. “We think what has

actually unfolded over the last six months, which has defied many of the expectations and conventional wisdom, is a vindication of taking our time and being methodical in putting forward the strategy.”

Although Russia has proved to be perhaps less of a direct military competitor with the U.S. than previously thought, the NSS doesn’t minimize the threat posed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The report casts Russia as an “immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability.” The administration will not waver in its commitment to Ukraine and its partnership with NATO allies to beef up security assistance to Kyiv, the NSS says.

Mr. Sullivan said the February invasion of Ukraine delayed but did not “fundamentally alter” the administration’s approach to foreign policy but provided a real-world example of the need to have a coherent strategy in place.

“I do believe that [the Russian-Ukrainian war] presents in living color the key elements of our approach — the emphasis on allies, the importance of strengthening the hand and the democratic world, standing up for fellow democracies and for democratic values.”

China is cast in a different — and more formidable — light. Beijing, the document says, “is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it.”

“Beijing has ambitions to create an enhanced sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world’s leading power,” the NSS reads in part. “It is using its technological capacity and increasing influence over international institutions to create more permissive conditions for its own authoritarian model, and to mold global technology use and norms to privilege its interests and values. Beijing frequently uses its economic power to coerce countries.”

The administration vowed to hold China to account for human rights abuses, theft of intellectual property and other matters. On Taiwan, the NSS stressed that the Biden administration will adhere to the “One China” policy. Washington has long acknowledged Beijing’s position that Taiwan is part of China, even though the United States maintains informal diplomatic relations and substantial defense ties with the island democracy and does not technically recognize Chinese sovereignty over it.

On nuclear weapons, the NSS stressed that the U.S. will invest in modernizing its deterrence capabilities. That issue is of particular importance given recent nuclear saber-rattling from the Kremlin and revelations that China’s nuclear arsenal is growing far faster than anticipated.

The administration said it wants to reduce the role of nuclear weapons around the world.

“We remain equally committed to reducing the risks of nuclear war,” the strategy says. “This includes taking further steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy and pursuing realistic goals for mutual, verifiable arms control, which contribute to our deterrence strategy and strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 NATO struggles; cautious to avoid war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/nato-cautious-to-avoid-war-struggles-with-dual-cha/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/nato-cautious-to-avoid-war-struggles-with-dual-cha/</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS — NATO defense ministers met Wednesday as the alliance’s member countries face the twin challenges of struggling to make and supply weapons to Ukraine while protecting vital European infrastructure like pipelines or cables that Russia might want to sabotage in retaliation.</p> <p>In the almost eight months since President Vladimir Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine, the 30-nation military alliance has been treading a fine line, as an organization, providing only non-lethal support and defending its own territory to avoid being dragged into a wider war with a nuclear-armed Russia.</p>

Individual allies though continue to pour in weapons and ammunition, including armored vehicles and air defense or anti-tank systems. They're also training Ukrainian troops, building on the lessons NATO has taught Ukraine's military instructors since Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

But as the Russian missile strikes across Ukraine this week demonstrated, this is not enough. NATO defense ministers were taking stock Wednesday of the supply effort so far and to debate ways to encourage the defense industry to ramp up production in short order.

"Allies have provided air defense, but we need even more. We need different types of air defense, short-range, long-range air defense systems to take (out) ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, different systems for different tasks," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

"Ukraine is a big country, many cities. So we need to scale up to be able to help Ukraine defend even more cities and more territory against horrific Russian attacks against their civilian populations," Stoltenberg told reporters before chairing the meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

At the same time, national military stocks and arsenals are being depleted. Some countries are growing reluctant to provide Ukraine with more when they are no longer entirely sure that they can protect their own territories and airspace.

The issue, as one senior diplomat put it, is: "how do we arm Ukraine without disarming ourselves?" The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity because the discussions involve collective security concerns.

For the defense industry, predictability is paramount. Companies need long-term orders and certainty before they commit to extend production lines. But no one is sure how long the war in Ukraine will last, making it difficult to know how much equipment is needed.

Still, Putin's attack on a sovereign country without provocation, and his threats to use nuclear weapons to defend seized territory, have made many allies neighboring Russia and Ukraine jittery.

So the United States and its partners want to boost weapons production by sending clear signals to industry, as they pool resources and send Ukraine the hardware that it needs, all while ensuring that no major gaps appear in national stockpiles.

Putin, for his part has warned NATO against deeper involvement in Ukraine. In recent weeks, as power and gas bills spiral and Europe struggles to decrease its dependency on Russia for energy, apparent acts of sabotage damaged two major pipelines once meant to bring natural gas to Germany.

The Polish operator of the Druzhba - or "Friendship" - oil pipeline, one of the world's longest pipelines and which originates in Russia, said Wednesday that it had detected a leak underground near the city of Plock in central Poland. The line supplies crude to Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Austria and Germany.

Stoltenberg said that following the apparent sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines between Russia and Germany, NATO has "doubled our presence in the Baltic and North Seas to over 30 ships, supported by maritime patrol aircraft and undersea capabilities."

It's small comfort, given that about 8000 kilometers (nearly 5,000 miles) of oil and gas pipelines crisscross the North Sea alone. Systems, networks and grids are impossible to watch 24/7. Even the resources of energy companies, national authorities and NATO may not be enough to keep guard.

NATO's aim, for now, is to better coordinate between these actors, to better gather intelligence and improve the way it is shared, and watch over facilities, with aerial and undersea drones and other surveillance equipment.



No responsibility has been established for the pipeline incidents. But NATO is also trying to be clear in deterring Russia. “Any deliberate attack against allies’ critical infrastructure would be met with a united and determined response,” Stoltenberg said ahead of Wednesday’s meeting.

He declined to say what kind of response that might be, or whether an accumulation of such hybrid attacks might trigger NATO’s collective defense clause - Article 5 of its founding treaty - which ensures that an attack on any one ally would be met with a response from them all.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Astounding impact, reach of long Covid
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/oct/12/long-covid-coronavirus-data-symptoms-causes-studies">https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/oct/12/long-covid-coronavirus-data-symptoms-causes-studies</a>
GIST	<p>Earlier this year, CDC researchers pored through millions of American health records looking for patients who might have long Covid. But figuring out who has the condition isn’t easy.</p> <p>That’s because there is no test for long Covid.</p> <p>In fact, scientists still don’t know what exactly causes it.</p> <p>Long Covid is a <a href="#">catchall term</a> to describe an array of symptoms people experience weeks or months after they recover from Covid-19, usually when they are no longer infectious. Some people have reported experiencing several of them; others report just one or two.</p> <p>That’s why the CDC researchers looked at how many people experienced at least one of the <i>symptoms</i> of long Covid.</p> <p>But they had to figure out which of these were caused by Covid, and which were caused by something else – because many of these symptoms, like being excessively fatigued, can be caused by long Covid or a host of other unrelated conditions.</p> <p>So the researchers sorted through nearly 2m electronic health records and separated people who have had a positive Covid-19 diagnosis and people who haven’t. Then they looked for symptoms.</p> <p>Long Covid studies all have slightly differing results, depending on how the data is collected and what’s being measured. For example, a separate <a href="#">study</a> of nearly 3,800 people who probably have long Covid found that the probability of having at least one symptom after 35 weeks was greater than 90%.</p> <p>But they all point in the same direction: something about Covid-19 causes a significant portion of people to experience symptoms <a href="#">long after</a> the initial sickness, even if the initial sickness was mild – and no one is fully safe.</p> <p><b>Older people appear to be at slightly higher risk</b> of developing long Covid symptoms, notably kidney problems and mental health conditions, according to the CDC research. But the risk isn’t much lower for younger people.</p> <p><b>People who were hospitalized with Covid-19</b> are probably at higher risk of developing long Covid symptoms compared with those who were not, according to a meta analysis of dozens of studies. But even people who had a mild case of Covid have a pretty good chance of experiencing long Covid symptoms.</p> <p><b>Women are more likely to develop long Covid symptoms</b>, according to the meta-analysis. This is in line with <a href="#">previous studies</a> showing <a href="#">women have a higher risk level</a>.</p> <p><b>Being vaccinated may reduce your chances</b> of developing long Covid symptoms, according to <a href="#">several studies</a>. One <a href="#">study</a> of nearly 26m electronic medical records found that people who received the first dose of a Covid vaccine before their diagnosis were significantly less likely to experience at least one long Covid symptom between 12 and 20 weeks after being diagnosed.</p>

But it's not so clearcut. A more [recent study](#) of US Veterans Affairs data found that being fully vaccinated before infection may only minimally reduce the risk of long Covid symptoms.

**One area where data is lacking is race.** Experts argue Black Americans [haven't been sufficiently included in long Covid trials](#) and treatment programs, potentially because many of these studies [only](#) look at people enrolled in healthcare systems. So good data on racial disparities is hard to come by.

But it's likely that long Covid affects Black, Latino and Indigenous Americans at higher rates because those communities had higher infection rates and [higher rates of hospitalization](#). Some [studies hint](#) at this emerging racial disparity.

Socioeconomic factors also play a role: poor Americans consistently have worse outcomes.

**Arguably the best hint for what causes long Covid** comes from a [study](#) by dozens of researchers published in January 2022, in which they followed Covid patients for two to three months after their infection. They found that long Covid symptoms have a high correlation with four factors:

- High levels of the virus RNA in blood.
- Pre-existing type 2 diabetes.
- High levels of Epstein-Barr virus DNA in blood.
- The presence of "autoantibodies" that attack the person's own body.

**Long Covid will cost the world a lot of money.** Not only are long Covid symptoms being experienced by a huge number of people, but the condition also affects younger people who will suffer from the condition [through several decades of life](#) – including later years when other illnesses could compound the illness. It's tough to estimate the worldwide cost long Covid will have. But in the US alone, the condition will cost the economy about \$2.6tn, according to [Harvard researchers](#) – about a [tenth](#) of the annual US GDP.

**Long Covid has caused a huge surge in medical spending.** An [analysis](#) in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that if long Covid treatment is similar to that of chronic fatigue syndrome, it would cost about \$9,000 each year per patient. A [2022 study](#) estimates will cost the US between \$149bn and \$362bn in medical expenses and lost income. This doesn't account for disability benefits, social services and other costs.

**Long Covid drastically reduces people's ability to work.** A survey of people who probably have long Covid symptoms found that about two in three people had their work schedule affected by the disease.

**Long Covid contributes to the American labor shortage,** according to a [Brookings Institution](#) analysis. Long Covid shrunk the workforce by about 1.6 million full-time equivalent workers at any given time in the first 20 months of the pandemic.

These numbers don't capture the frustration and helplessness long Covid has caused millions of people around the world.

The disease remains shrouded in uncertainty, but all new findings are small steps toward the answers millions of people around the world are seeking.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Seattle residents plead for help from city
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/lake-city-residents-at-a-loss-of-what-to-do-with-growing-rv-encampment/281-a172dd50-ba7d-4d2b-ab32-e33c6b620616">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/lake-city-residents-at-a-loss-of-what-to-do-with-growing-rv-encampment/281-a172dd50-ba7d-4d2b-ab32-e33c6b620616</a>
GIST	SEATTLE — Trash bags are piled up on the sidewalk of 35th Avenue Northeast in Lake City. There are bikes with missing tires next to the line of RVs that line the busy Avenue.

Neighbors have been reaching out to city officials, councilmembers and lawmakers looking for help in cleaning up the encampment, but they've gotten nowhere.

"It is really disappointing and it's not the Seattle I knew growing up," said Lily Crawford who grew up in Lake City and came back to Seattle after twenty years to raise her family.

"It gets very volatile there, especially in the evenings," said Crawford. Her kids aren't allowed to roam the neighborhood like she did as a child. "And we have to explain things to kids that are uncomfortable like why people are having fires there, why the police are always there, why trash bags are there, why people are putting needles into their bellybuttons."

Crawford is one of many neighbors at a loss over what to do with the RVs.

"I think we're in a huge amount of compassion fatigue, it was okay for a little while to have some RVs here, but it's been a really long time now," said Teresa Posakoni who has spent the last five months calling the city, using the Find it Fix it App and online portal.

"I don't feel like there's any coordinated response within the city, they're pointing to different departments," said Posakoni.

Recently five households wrote a letter to the Seattle City Council requesting immediate action be taken. They say it's a safety hazard for kids with schools blocks away and trash and human waste are piling up and going into an environmentally sensitive area.

"It makes me feel frustrated and sad and really confused about what the city is doing about it. I like to think we're a kind city and a welcoming city, but it makes me feel like we're being taken advantage of," said Crawford.

According to Mayor Bruce Harrel's proposed budget, it would have 'unprecedented investments in affordable housing and homeless response in Seattle.' The budget includes \$353 million to help pay for multifamily housing investments, King County Regional Homelessness Authority, and City Homelessness Programs and Services. However, that doesn't fix the problem now.

"They seem to use this space right here in front of my neighbor's house as a public toilet," said Crawford who spent her weekend cleaning up human waste along her street.

"There's no answers, no, there's no answers," said Posakoni.

KING 5 reached out to Councilmember Debora Juarez for a comment but was told the council is in an all-day budget meeting. Mayor Bruce Harrell also declined an interview.

For now, some neighbors said they're adding extra security and will continue to try and engage the city.

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HEADLINE	10/12 ACT test scores drop to lowest in 30yrs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-world/act-test-scores/507-ac061f72-24c3-4b05-af6b-9b91765112fd">https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-world/act-test-scores/507-ac061f72-24c3-4b05-af6b-9b91765112fd</a>
GIST	<p>PHOENIX — Scores on the ACT college admissions test by this year's high school graduates hit their lowest point in more than 30 years — the latest evidence of the <a href="#">enormity of learning disruption</a> during the pandemic.</p> <p>The class of 2022's average ACT composite score was 19.8 out of 36, marking the first time since 1991 that the average score was below 20. What's more, an increasing number of high school students failed to meet any of the subject-area benchmarks set by the ACT — showing a <a href="#">decline in preparedness for college-level coursework</a>.</p>

The test scores, made public in a report Wednesday, show 42% of ACT-tested graduates in the class of 2022 met none of the subject benchmarks in English, reading, science and math, which are indicators of how well students are expected to perform in corresponding college courses.

In comparison, 38% of test takers in 2021 failed to meet any of the benchmarks.

“Academic preparedness is where we are seeing the decline,” said Rose Babington, senior director for state partnerships for the ACT. “Every time we see ACT test scores, we are talking about skills and standards, and the prediction of students to be successful and to know the really important information to succeed and persist through their first year of college courses.”

ACT scores have declined steadily in recent years. Still, “the magnitude of the declines this year is particularly alarming,” ACT CEO Janet Godwin said in a statement. “We see rapidly growing numbers of seniors leaving high school without meeting college-readiness benchmarks in any of the subjects we measure.”

The results offer a lens into systemic inequities in education, in place well before the pandemic shuttered schools and colleges temporarily waived testing requirements. For example, students without access to rigorous high school curriculum suffered more setbacks during pandemic disruptions, Babington said. Those students are from rural areas, come from low-income families and are often students of color.

The number of students taking the ACT has declined 30% since 2018, as graduates increasingly forgo college and some universities no longer require admissions tests. But participation plunged 37% among Black students, with 154,000 taking the test this year.

Standardized tests such as the ACT have faced growing concerns that they're unfair to minority and low-income students, as students with access to expensive test prep or advanced courses often perform better.

Babington defended the test as a measure of college readiness. “Now more than ever, the last few years have shown us the importance of having high-quality data to help inform how we support students,” Babington said.

Test scores now are optional for first-year student admission at many institutions. Some colleges, such as the University of California system, even opt for a test-blind policy, where scores are not considered even if submitted.

But many students still take the tests, hoping to get an edge in admissions by submitting their scores. Tyrone Jordan, a freshman at test-optional Arizona State University, said he took the ACT and the SAT to get ahead of other students and help him receive scholarships.

Jordan, who wants to pursue mechanical engineering, said he thinks his rigorous schedule at Tempe Preparatory Academy prepared him for college, and the standardized tests helped support him and his family financially.

“All the test did for me was give me extra financial money,” Jordan said.

While Jordan was always planning to take the test, many students struggle with access or choose not to take the test since their universities of choice no longer require it. In Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Tennessee and Wyoming, everyone is tested.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Seattle: no traffic deaths, injuries by 2030
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-invests-83-million-program-end-traffic-deaths-serious-injuries-by-2030/OHWYY3YDFZEHRMJHNNWQM4H673A/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-invests-83-million-program-end-traffic-deaths-serious-injuries-by-2030/OHWYY3YDFZEHRMJHNNWQM4H673A/</a>

GIST	<p>SEATTLE — For National Walk and Roll to School Day, students at Dunlap Elementary School were joined by Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Brent Jones and Seattle Department of Transportation Director Greg Spotts as they walked to school.</p> <p>The National Center for Safe Routes to School presented Seattle with the 2022 U.S. Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award.</p> <p>The city’s <a href="#">Vision Zero</a> program aims to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets in Seattle by 2030.</p> <p>“In the budget we proposed \$8.3 million in projects to make it safer to walk, and to roll, and to bike to school,” said Harrell.</p> <p>Since 2019, SDOT has added leading pedestrian intervals, which give pedestrians a three-to-seven second head start at intersections, to nearly half of the city’s traffic signals.</p> <p>SDOT reported there has been a 50% reduction in pedestrian turning collisions and 35% reduction in serious and fatal collisions at intersections where the intervals were added.</p> <p>“It’s all about safety, we will lead with safety, we will lead with people, and so we don’t want anyone walking or jogging or riding a bike, or even driving a car in a transit accident, we want to avoid it,” said Harrell.</p> <p>Around the school, several streets are under construction for a Safe Routes to School project.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 ‘Disaster response’ tackles homelessness</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-king-county-regional-homelessness-authority-department-of-housing-urban-development-activates-emergency-operation-center-for-disaster-response-to-homelessness#">https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-king-county-regional-homelessness-authority-department-of-housing-urban-development-activates-emergency-operation-center-for-disaster-response-to-homelessness#</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (KOMO) — The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) and Seattle leaders announced the activation of the city’s emergency operations center to address the homelessness crisis.</p> <p>Dubbed the Housing Command Center, the facility is now functioning as a hub for homeless resources in the region in a "disaster response frame of mind", according to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regional administrator Margaret Salazar.</p> <p>“Just like folks are doing on the ground right now in Florida post hurricane, with that kind of mentality – how can we work with urgency, efficiency, and collaboration?” Salazar told KOMO News.</p> <p>HUD is providing technical assistance to bring together outreach and housing resource organizations into one space.</p> <p>“We’re all pulling in the same direction and that’s the force that you need after a disaster to make sure folks get rehoused and that’s the approach we are taking here. Even well-intentioned folks that are administering programs and resources and engaging community members may not be doing that at common purpose with everyone in the same virtual or literal room,” Salazar said.</p> <p>According to the KCRHA, the command center has already identified more than 300 potential housing units and engaged with 660 people who are living unsheltered in downtown Seattle.</p> <p>KCRHA CEO Marc Dones said the new approach aims to give people experiencing homelessness at least three options for housing.</p>

	<p>“The majority of people turn down things that don’t work for them. That is what people have said no to – do you want to move into a congregate shelter where you don’t have room for your stuff, where we can’t take your pets, where it’s gender-segregated so you can’t be a couple – those are the things people have said ‘that doesn’t work for me,” Dones said at a press conference Wednesday morning.</p> <p>Dones said the operations center will also coordinate basic furniture for apartments and services to help people move in, as well as advocates who will work with landlords to ensure tenants can stay housed.</p> <p>Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell spoke briefly at Wednesday’s press conference and said his <a href="#">recently proposed budget</a> includes \$ 90 million to increase the budget of the KCRHA, which would be roughly a 13% increase.</p> <p>Harrell said the Housing Command Center will "supercharge" street outreach in the city. “No one should have to live homeless or outdoors,” he said.</p> <p>KOMO will have continuing coverage of the Housing Command Center on KOMO 4 News this afternoon.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p><a href="#">Referral dashboard</a> by <a href="#">Jeremy Harris</a> on Scribd</p> <p><a href="#">KCRHA info on housing command center</a> by <a href="#">Jeremy Harris</a> on Scribd</p>

HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Seattle, Tacoma among ‘least-safe’ cities</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-tacoma-rank-among-least-safe-u-s-cities-study-finds">https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-tacoma-rank-among-least-safe-u-s-cities-study-finds</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - <a href="#">Seattle</a> and <a href="#">Tacoma</a> rank among the least safe major cities in the U.S., according to a <a href="#">study by WalletHub</a>.</p> <p>Of a list of 182, Seattle ranks no. 148 and Tacoma ranks no. 158.</p> <p>The methodology used does not just revolve around crime—WalletHub reports it compares three categories across the most populated cities: home and community safety, natural disaster risk, and financial safety.</p> <p>Home and community safety includes metrics like percent of residents vaccinated against COVID-19, presence of terrorist attacks and mass shootings, violent crimes per capita, law enforcement officers per capita, share of sheltered homeless, and perception of safety.</p> <p>Natural disaster risk measures the risk levels of events like earthquakes, floods, hail, hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires. Unfortunately for Western Washington, all but one of those metrics are a possibility.</p> <p>Financial safety weighs metrics like unemployment rate, foreclosure rate, poverty rate, debt-to-income ratio, job security and share of homeowners spending at least 35% of their income on housing.</p> <p>According to WalletHub, each metric was rated on a 100-point scale, with 100 representing the highest level of safety. Certain metrics are double- or triple-weighted, while others are half-weighted.</p> <p>Seattle earned high marks—the no. 7 rank—for financial safety, but fell down the ranks for community safety and natural disaster risk.</p> <p>Tacoma, likewise, earned a no. 91 rank for financial safety, but has similar low ranks for community safety and natural disasters.</p> <p><a href="#">Spokane</a> earned the no. 60 spot, with a 19 for natural disaster risk and decent financial safety. <a href="#">Vancouver</a>, Washington earned the no. 58 spot with average scores across the board, and slightly higher financial safety.</p>



	<p>Portland, Oregon ranked 137th with low community safety, decent natural disaster risk, and 12th-ranked financial safety.</p> <p>On the other end of the list:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Columbia, Maryland</li> <li>2. Nashua, New Hampshire</li> <li>3. Laredo, Texas</li> <li>4. Portland, Maryland</li> <li>5. Warwick, Rhode Island</li> <li>6. Yonkers, New York</li> <li>7. Gilbert, Arizona</li> <li>8. Burlington, Vermont</li> <li>9. Raleigh, North Carolina</li> <li>10. Lewiston, Maine</li> </ol>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Unvaxxed firefighters' injunction tossed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/king-co-judge-rejects-injunction-for-seattle-firefighters-terminated-over-vaccine-mandate">https://www.q13fox.com/news/king-co-judge-rejects-injunction-for-seattle-firefighters-terminated-over-vaccine-mandate</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - A <a href="#">King County</a> judge rejected an injunction filed by <a href="#">Seattle firefighters terminated</a> for not getting the COVID vaccine.</p> <p>Judge Matthew Williams denied a motion for injunction, which would have protected the firefighters from being fired for refusing to get vaccinated. According to the judge, the firefighters failed to prove irreparable injury from their termination, and argued that "public interest" is greater than their desire for injunctive relief.</p> <p><a href="#">Seattle's</a> COVID-19 Civil Emergency Proclamation <a href="#">ends Oct. 31</a>, with several pandemic safety policies rolling back at the start of November.</p> <p>The city of Seattle and Chief Harold Scoggins are facing a lawsuit from a group of 23 former Seattle firefighters for religious discrimination and wage theft. The suit is tied to the firefighters' decision to not get vaccinated.</p> <p>However, the city's vaccine mandate remains in effect until further notice.</p> <p>Previously, 23 firefighters with the Seattle Fire Department—23 of some <a href="#">1,887 employees fired by the state</a>—sued Fire Chief Harold Scoggins and the city for religious discrimination and wage theft.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Defensive weapon systems rush to Ukraine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/ukraine-russia-missile-defense.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/ukraine-russia-missile-defense.html</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — In just two days this week, Russian forces fired more than 100 cruise missiles and dozens of exploding drones at cities across Ukraine, far more than the nation's aging air defenses were ever expected to encounter. And yet fewer than half made it to their targets, Ukrainian officials say.</p> <p>Ukraine's success in knocking down those projectiles, and the death and destruction caused wherever missiles slipped through, has reinvigorated calls by officials in Kyiv for Western countries to provide more sophisticated defensive weapons systems. At a meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Wednesday, the United States and other allies readily agreed, pledging to rapidly provide the weaponry.</p> <p>Germany began delivery of four units of a missile defense system so advanced even its own forces have yet to use it. The Netherlands promised millions of dollars in air-defense missiles, and President Emmanuel Macron of France said his country would send "radars, systems and anti-air missiles."</p>

And a day after the Biden administration said it was working to speed up delivery of two advanced missile systems, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III said, “The systems will be provided as fast as we can physically get them there.”

But for all the gaps made clear by the bombardment, which killed at least 19 people and scarred some two dozen Ukrainian cities, Ukrainian patchwork air defenses have proved to be one of the great successes of the war, and among the most unexpected. And Ukraine’s response to the attacks underscored how far the air defense units have come since President Vladimir V. Putin ordered his forces to invade on Feb. 24.

On Monday, the first day of the bombardment, the country’s air defenses took out more than half of the roughly 80 cruise missiles fired, according to Ukraine’s military. And on Day 2 of the attack, only eight missiles were able to hit their targets out of a total of 28 fired, the military said. It said Ukrainian forces had also destroyed nearly 50 explosive drones this week. The figures could not be independently confirmed.

Part of the success relates to better coordination between early warning systems, which detect rocket launches, and air defense units on the ground charged with shooting them down, said Justin Bronk, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute specializing in air power. The Caspian and Black Seas, from which many of Russia’s cruise missiles are launched, are closely monitored by both Ukrainian and Western militaries, giving air defense forces plenty of time to react.

“Ukrainian air defenses have gotten significantly more capable, particularly better coordinated, since the early weeks of the war,” Dr. Bronk said. The 40 to 60 percent interception rates being reported by the Ukrainian military, he said, “are broadly in line with what we’d expect from a much more efficiently organized territorial air defense system.”

Before the war, air defense forces from Ukraine’s military gathered just once a year for live-fire exercises at which they would practice shooting at lumbering Soviet-era drones that mimicked the movements of cruise missiles but not their tremendous speed.

“That was basically all the training,” said Yuri Ignat, the spokesman for the Ukrainian military’s Air Force Command. “No one was prepared for a mass attack against all Ukrainian territory.”

In the first hours of the February invasion, Russian forces concentrated their attacks on Ukraine’s missile defense batteries, air force jets and air-defense radar installations. Through a combination of preparation and quick thinking by Ukrainian commanders — as well as poor intelligence and bad aim by Russian forces — many of the defenses were preserved, ensuring that Russia never gained full control over Ukrainian skies.

In the absence of sufficient weaponry to defend every corner of their territory, Ukraine’s air defense forces are constantly on the move, trying to anticipate the location of future attacks while avoiding detection by Russia’s missile forces, Mr. Ignat said.

“Today, fighting the war requires a lot of maneuvering, constantly moving as the enemy tries to find our weak points and work around those areas where we have our air defenses,” he said. “We are doing these maneuvers, trying to find locations where we can cause the greatest damage and hit the most air targets.”

The condition of Ukraine’s weapons systems makes effective air defense even more of a challenge. Its military relies mostly on Soviet-era systems like the Buk-M1 and S-300, along with its fleet of fighter aircraft, though these are less effective than rocket systems.

Success often comes down to the skill of the troops operating the weapons.

On Monday, Dmytro Shumskyi, a Ukrainian soldier in an anti-aircraft platoon in northern Ukraine, took out two high-velocity cruise missiles using only a shoulder-fired rocket launcher designed to hit

helicopters and other low-flying targets at short range. The feat earned special praise from Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

"One person saved dozens of lives," Mr. Zelensky said in his evening address. "Thank you for that!"

Ukraine's antiaircraft and missile defense operators have a reputation for skill, though Russia's military planners have sometimes failed to take this into account. When Russia invaded the Republic of Georgia in 2008, the Kremlin was shocked by the destructiveness of the small country's air defenses. Only later did Mr. Putin discover to his ire that Ukraine had secretly delivered air defense systems to Georgia before the war and sent advisers to teach the Georgians how to use them.

Ukrainian officials say their current systems are sufficient to counter smaller, slower-moving cruise missiles such as the air-fired X-101 and X-555, as well as sea-based Kalibr missiles, all of which constituted the bulk of the missiles fired this week. Larger missiles like the hypersonic ground-fired Iskander are much harder to intercept.

Iskander missiles do not appear to have been used in the recent widespread attacks, but are thought to have been fired in some of the most devastating attacks in the war, including strikes on two military barracks in the southern city of Mykolaiv that killed dozens of soldiers.

Western officials say that Russia is holding back some of its diminishing supplies of larger and more advanced weaponry, reserving them for the most high-value targets. Some are also used to carry nuclear warheads, so Russia must conserve enough to maintain its deterrent capabilities, officials said.

To counter the more advanced missiles, Ukraine has asked for more sophisticated Western weapons systems like the American-made National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, known as NASAMS. The systems would provide short- to medium-range coverage over 30 to 50 kilometers (about 18 to 30 miles).

On Tuesday, the White House said that two NASAMS, each equipped with radar-guided missiles powerful enough to take down fighter jets, combat drones and cruise missiles, would be delivered to Ukraine. This comes on top of the delivery of the four German-made IRIS-T air defense systems, which began arriving in Ukraine on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the Netherlands announced that it would send \$15 million worth of air defense rockets to Ukraine.

Pressed on why the advanced systems had not been sent to Ukraine sooner, the American ambassador to NATO, Julianne Smith, said that Kyiv's requests for weapons had "evolved" over the eight-month war and that the Biden administration was working with other allies to keep up.

Douglas Barrie, a military expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, said it was unlikely that many countries had many of the advanced air defense systems on hand.

"And at the moment," he said, "given the current security environment, if you've only got a few of these in your own country, there's going to be a bit of resistance to hand them off to somebody else."

In the war's earliest days, Western officials scrambled to shift stockpiles of Russian-style air defenses like the S-300 from Eastern European countries to Ukrainian forces, which had already been trained in their use. But with Ukrainian troops burning through those arsenals faster than they could be replenished from a dwindling global supply, American and NATO officials concluded that Ukraine would need Western defensive systems as the war went on.

The United States has already sent more than 1,400 Stinger missiles, but the barrage of Russian missile attacks on Monday and Tuesday demonstrated the urgent need for more powerful defenses.

Ukraine has asked Israel for air defense systems as well, given the successes of that country's Iron Dome as well as the longer-range Barak 8. Israel has so far declined, however, reluctant to provoke Russia into obstructing Israeli airstrikes in Syria, where Russia has a military presence.

But a senior Ukrainian official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said that Israel was providing Ukraine with basic intelligence about Iranian drones, which Russia has begun to use on the battlefield, and that a private Israeli firm was providing Ukraine with satellite imagery of Russian troop positions.

On Wednesday, Ukraine shot down at least nine such drones, according to Ukraine's military, and Britain's Defense Ministry in its daily assessment of the war assessed that the drones were failing to fulfill Russia's war needs because they are "slow" and "easy to target."

Ukraine's defense minister, Oleksii Reznikov, praised the pledge of new weapons systems on Wednesday, asserting that "a new era of air defense" had begun in Ukraine. But he urged allies to do more.

"There is a moral imperative to protect the sky over Ukraine in order to save our people," he said.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 US: Ukraine offensive will push thru winter</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war.html</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS — Ukraine will remain on the offensive through the winter, retaking more ground lost to the Russian invasion, the U.S. secretary of defense predicted on Wednesday, adding that the United States and its allies would supply Ukraine with whatever weapons and supplies it needed for "the difficult weeks, months and years ahead."</p> <p>"I expect that Ukraine will continue to do everything it can throughout the winter to regain its territory and to be effective on the battlefield, and we're going to do everything we can to make sure that they have what's required to be effective," Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III said after a meeting in Brussels of top military officials from some 50 countries aiding Ukraine.</p> <p>"Most recently, we've seen them be very effective both in the east and down in the south as they've taken back quite a bit of territory from the Russians, so we can expect that that type of activity will continue on through the winter," he said.</p> <p>Comments before and after the meeting signaled a hardening of international determination to back Kyiv in the face of Russia's recent missile and drone attacks on civilian targets across Ukraine; talk of nudging both sides toward a negotiated settlement, common among some U.S. allies early in the war, has all but evaporated.</p> <p>"That resolve has only been heightened by the deliberate cruelty of Russia's new barrage against Ukraine's cities," Mr. Austin said at a news conference in Brussels. "Those assaults on targets with no military purpose again reveal the malice of Putin's war of choice."</p> <p>Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was with the secretary, described such attacks as "a war crime in the international rules of war."</p> <p>The meeting of the U.S.-led Ukraine Defense Contact Group focused on Ukraine's need for additional robust air-defense systems, more artillery and munitions for both, and produced new commitments from some of the dozens of nations involved.</p> <p>Ukraine said Germany had delivered an air-defense missile system so new that it had never been used in battle and even Germany's military, itself, had not fielded it yet. The United States said it was expediting delivery of another system, and France and the Netherlands said they would supply still others.</p>

Despite the stepped-up Russian strikes, Ukrainian forces remain on the offensive against the Kremlin's beleaguered troops in south and east Ukraine, retaking territory that had been seized by Russia; on Wednesday, the government said it had recaptured five villages in southern Kherson Province.

Military analysts have speculated that harsh winter weather could tamp down the fighting and that Ukraine was racing to seize as much terrain as it could before that happened. But Mr. Austin, a former four-star Army general, gave the clearest signal yet that he thought Ukraine would press its advantage while Russian troops were demoralized and in retreat.

U.S. officials suggested that Ukrainian forces, with ample backing, could be better supplied for winter combat than Russia, which has little international support. Mr. Austin said that while some nations were not in a position to provide Ukraine with weapons, "we urge them to provide vital nonlethal aid such as medical supplies and cold-weather gear that the Ukrainians need to fight in the winter."

Last month, as Russian troops fled from some regions in disarray, Ukraine retook thousands of square miles it had lost shortly after the Feb. 24 invasion. But now, the Russians are digging in and are being reinforced by former prison inmates and fresh conscripts, said Serhiy Haidai, the Ukrainian chief of the Luhansk region.

Mr. Haidai's claim, which could not be independently verified, is one of the first indications that President Vladimir V. Putin's desperate efforts to bolster Russian forces are having an effect on the battlefield. Mr. Putin [ordered a military draft](#) just three weeks ago — though officials said the new conscripts would not be sent to the front — and the Wagner Group, a mercenary force led by a close ally of Mr. Putin's, has been [recruiting inmates to serve as frontline soldiers](#), offering the promise of freedom if they survive.

On Saturday, an explosion badly damaged the Kerch Strait Bridge linking Russia to Crimea, a symbol of Mr. Putin's seizure of that peninsula in 2014 and a major supply route for his forces in southern Ukraine. Speaking on the condition of anonymity because the government is not publicly addressing the matter, a senior Ukrainian official confirmed that, as the Kremlin had charged, Ukrainian intelligence was responsible.

Russia's domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Security Service, known by its Russian acronym F.S.B., said on Wednesday that it had arrested eight people, including five Russians, in connection with the explosion, which it said had resulted from a truck bomb.

In apparent retaliation for the bridge explosion, Russia stepped up attacks on cities in Ukraine to the highest level since early in the war, striking infrastructure like water and power systems, as well as homes. Ukraine says it shot down many of the cruise missiles and drones launched by Russian forces, but others got through, with deadly results.

When the war began, many military analysts thought that Russian air power would wipe out Ukraine's air defenses in a matter of days or weeks, giving Moscow unchallenged control of the skies. That has not happened, and as a result, Russian warplanes rarely venture deep into Ukraine, where they risk being shot down.

General Milley and Mr. Austin acknowledged Ukraine's need for still more air defenses, but did not say whether the United States had committed to sending specific systems that were not previously announced.

White House officials said on Tuesday that the Biden administration was working to deliver to Ukraine, as quickly as possible, two air-defense systems known as NASAMs, with a range of up to 30 miles. Such weapons are used to defend the White House and other sites in Washington from an aerial attack.

Ukraine's government said on Wednesday that it had received from Germany the first of four newly developed IRIS-T air-defense systems, with a somewhat shorter range, which even Germany does not

have yet. The first example had been promised to Egypt, with Ukraine scheduled to receive one next month, but the government in Cairo agreed to trade its place in line with Kyiv, the German government said.

“All the reports point to it being an effective system,” said Thomas Wiegold, a journalist who specializes in German military matters, “but it has never been tested under actual enemy fire.”

In his nightly address, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said, “The more audacious and cruel Russian terror becomes, the more obvious it is to the world that helping Ukraine to protect the sky is one of the most important humanitarian tasks for Europe of our time.”

General Milley said, “What Ukraine is asking for, and what we think can be provided, is an integrated air missile defense system” consisting of different weapons for short, medium and long range.

But the result will be a hodgepodge of Western-supplied systems and the Soviet- and Russian-made batteries Ukraine already has, and it will be some time before they can become a functioning whole, General Milley said.

“The task will be to bring those together, get them deployed, get them trained because each of these systems is different, make sure they can link together with the command and control and communication systems, and make sure they have radars that can talk to each other so that they can acquire targets on the inbound flights,” he said. “So it’s quite complicated from a technical standpoint.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Humanitarian parole plan for Venezuelans</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/us/politics/biden-venezuela-migrants-humanitarian-parole.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/us/politics/biden-venezuela-migrants-humanitarian-parole.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Wednesday announced it would accept up to 24,000 Venezuelans via a humanitarian parole plan, although the scope of the program was far narrower than a similar one for Ukrainians.</p> <p>The parole plan would grant Venezuelans a narrow legal pathway to the United States, and the administration hopes those eligible will apply for it remotely and fly to the United States rather than making the dangerous trek to the southwest border.</p> <p>The Department of Homeland Security also said it would expand its use of a public health rule to start expelling to Mexico Venezuelans who illegally cross the U.S. border.</p> <p>The reliance on a Trump-era pandemic rule crystallized the Biden administration’s balancing act in both helping refugees and tightening border restrictions in the face of Republican attacks on President Biden’s immigration policy and record numbers of illegal border crossings. And there is no guarantee that just 27 days before the midterm elections, it will have the desired effect.</p> <p>Until now, the majority of Venezuelans who crossed into the United States have not been expelled under the public health authority, known as Title 42. Instead, they were screened and released into the country temporarily to face removal proceedings in immigration court, where they have the option to apply for asylum.</p> <p>Venezuelans who apply for the humanitarian parole program must have someone in the United States who can show that they are able to financially support the migrant for up to two years. During the application process, the government will assess the sponsor’s finances and vet the applicants, who will also have to have certain vaccinations and comply with other public health requirements. Venezuelans who are granted the humanitarian parole will be temporarily allowed to work legally in the United States.</p> <p>In addition, any Venezuelan who enters Mexico or Panama illegally or has permanent resident status, dual nationality or refugee status with another country is ineligible for the parole program. Venezuelans who</p>



have already been released in the United States to face removal proceedings are not eligible for the program either.

The administration said its plan for Venezuelans was based on what it described as the success of the Uniting for Ukraine program, which was instituted after Ukrainians — fleeing the Russian invasion — made their way to the U.S. border from Mexico. The Biden administration has since welcomed more than 100,000 Ukrainians, through the parole program and other resettlement measures. The Department of Homeland Security says there are no limits on the number of Ukrainians who can come to the country under the program.

While the Ukrainian program received bipartisan support, Republicans have been less welcoming to the Venezuelans, more than 150,000 of whom have been apprehended at the U.S. southwestern border from October 2021 through the end of August.

“These actions make clear that there is a lawful and orderly way for Venezuelans to enter the United States, and lawful entry is the only way,” Alejandro N. Mayorkas, the Homeland Security secretary, said in a statement about the new program on Wednesday.

Announcing a new policy less than a month before the midterm elections is a calculated and political decision by the White House, John Thomas, a Republican strategist, said.

“This is more of an effort to soften people’s anger on what’s happening on the southern border,” Mr. Thomas said. “It also gives the administration a talking point that they are ‘doing something.’”

But it is not clear that the humanitarian parole and expansion of Title 42 will significantly stem the number of border crossings, as Venezuelans make up only a fraction of the migrants crossing illegally.

Advocates for immigrant rights have been urging the White House to create a humanitarian parole program for migrants from particularly unstable countries, including Venezuela.

But they are not supportive of a plan that ties humanitarian parole to expelling thousands of other Venezuelan migrants to the dangerous northern border region of Mexico.

“It’s great to be expanding access to humanitarian parole, but it can’t come at the cost of additional harm to asylum seekers,” said Raha Wala, the deputy director for legislative advocacy for the National Immigration Law Center. “Title 42 is a cruel, Trump-era, anti-immigrant policy that deserves to be relegated to the dustbin of history, not expanded.”

Escaping poverty and political instability, more than 6.8 million Venezuelans have fled their country since 2015, according to the United Nations. Most went to other South American countries.

But in the past year, more and more have been making their way to the United States. In August, Venezuelans made up about 12 percent of those who crossed the southwestern border illegally. While a majority of migrants who do so are expelled back to their country or to Mexico under the public health order, the U.S. government has not been able to repatriate Venezuelans because of minimal diplomatic relations between Washington and Caracas. And — until now — Mexico has not been willing to take in Venezuelans from the United States.

The humanitarian parole program announced on Wednesday appears to be a much more limited version of earlier proposals. One under consideration as recently as last week included Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans, according to officials briefed on the discussions. It was not immediately clear why these nationalities were ultimately left out.

Mr. Biden has overseen a record number of border crossings that is part of a global movement with more displaced people than ever before. Since he has been in office, the government has screened and released more than 1 million migrants who crossed the border illegally, giving them temporary permission to stay

	<p>in the country until they face deportation proceedings in immigration court. The Biden administration has also expelled migrants more than 2 million times under the authority of the public health rule.</p> <p>The Biden administration tried to stop using the public health authority earlier this year, but a federal court stopped it from doing so. Now the administration has expanded the authority instead.</p> <p>But for vulnerable Democrats in border states, like Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, the ability to campaign on a recent expansion to Title 42 could prove helpful in a tight race, said Carl Fogliani, a Republican political strategist.</p> <p>“They would want them to be out there saying how wonderful a development this is,” Mr. Fogliani said of the White House and Democrats dealing with border issues.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/12 Study: long-term risks of Covid</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/health/long-covid.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/health/long-covid.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A study of tens of thousands of people in Scotland found that one in 20 people who had been sick with Covid reported not recovering at all, and another four in 10 said they had not fully recovered from their infections many months later.</p> <p>The authors of the study, published on Wednesday in the journal Nature Communications, tried to home in on the long-term risks of Covid by comparing the frequency of symptoms in people with and without previous Covid diagnoses.</p> <p>People with previous symptomatic Covid infections reported certain persistent symptoms, such as breathlessness, palpitations and confusion or difficulty concentrating, at a rate roughly three times as high as uninfected people in surveys from six to 18 months later, the study found. Those patients also experienced elevated risks of more than 20 other symptoms relating to the heart, respiratory health, muscle aches, mental health and the sensory system.</p> <p>The findings strengthened calls from scientists for more expansive care options for long Covid patients in the United States and elsewhere, while also offering some good news.</p> <p>The study did not identify greater risks of long-term problems in people with asymptomatic coronavirus infections. It also found, in a much more limited subset of participants who had been given at least one dose of Covid vaccine before their infections, that vaccination appeared to help reduce if not eliminate the risk of some long Covid symptoms.</p> <p>People with severe initial Covid cases were at higher risk of long-term problems, the study found.</p> <p>“The beauty of this study is they have a control group, and they can isolate the proportion of symptomatology that is attributable to Covid infection,” said Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, chief of research at the V.A. St. Louis Health Care System and a clinical epidemiologist at Washington University in St. Louis, who was not involved in the research.</p> <p>“It also tracks with the broader idea that long Covid is truly a multisystem disorder,” Dr. Al-Aly said, one that resides “not only in the brain, not only in the heart — it’s all of the above.”</p> <p>Jill Pell, a professor of public health at the University of Glasgow who led the research, said the findings reinforced the importance of long Covid patients being offered support that extends beyond health care and also addresses needs related to jobs, education, poverty and disability.</p> <p>“It told us that Covid can appear differently in different individuals, and it can have more than one impact on your life,” Dr. Pell said. “Any approach to supporting people has to be, firstly, personalized and also holistic. The answer doesn’t just lie within the health care sector.”</p>

Long Covid refers to a constellation of problems that can plague patients for months or longer after a infection. Over the last year, researchers have given more attention to understanding the daunting aftereffects as the number of Covid cases exploded and health systems learned to better manage the initial stages of an infection.

U.S. government estimates have indicated that between 7.7 million and 23 million people in the United States could have long Covid.

Globally, “the condition is devastating people’s lives and livelihoods,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director general of the World Health Organization, wrote in an [article on Wednesday for The Guardian](#). He called on all countries to devote “immediate and sustained action equivalent to its scale.”

The authors of the study in Scotland tracked 33,000 people who had tested positive for the virus starting in April 2020 and 63,000 who had never been diagnosed with Covid. In six-month intervals, those people were asked about any symptoms they had, including tiredness, muscle aches, chest pain and neurological problems, and about any difficulties with daily life.

By comparing the frequency of those problems with infected and uninfected people, the researchers tried to overcome a challenge that many other long Covid researchers have confronted: how to ascribe less specific symptoms to Covid when those problems are also common in the general population and may be prevalent in the midst of a pandemic.

Several of the most common long Covid symptoms identified in the study were also reported by one-fifth to one-third of participants who had never been infected, the study found. But symptoms were significantly more common in people who had previously had Covid: Those participants were more likely to report 24 of the 26 symptoms tracked by the study.

Of those with previous Covid cases, 6 percent said on their most recent follow-up survey that they had not recovered at all and 42 percent said that they had only partly recovered.

Dr. Pell said that she was still studying the trajectory of long Covid symptoms over the months and years since an infection. But the new study opened a small window onto that question. In one group of previously infected patients, about 13 percent of people said that their symptoms had improved over time, while about 11 percent said they had deteriorated.

“Some do resolve over time,” Dr. Al-Aly said, “but also there’s a good number of people who remain symptomatic with a bunch of manifestations over longer time periods.”

Only a small portion of the study participants — about 4 percent — had been vaccinated before their infections, and many of those with only a single dose.

“We’re now really heavily reliant upon vaccination,” Dr. Pell said, “which does confer some protection, but it’s not absolute.”

Women, older people and those living in poorer areas also faced more serious aftereffects from an infection. So, too, did those with pre-existing health problems, including respiratory disease and depression.

About nine out of 10 study participants were white, making it more difficult to determine how and why long Covid risks may have differed among racial and ethnic groups.

For health systems still working to recover from recent Covid surges while facing an onslaught of patients with the flu and other respiratory illnesses, considerably more resources were needed to treat patients suffering from an earlier coronavirus infection, scientists said.

	“Our systems are not prepared,” Dr. Al-Aly said.
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Child care struggles worsen in rural areas</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Desperation-Child-care-struggle-worsens-in-17503987.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Desperation-Child-care-struggle-worsens-in-17503987.php</a>
GIST	<p>ASTORIA, Ore. (AP) — A shortage of child care in the U.S. has become so acute that it’s reaching far into rural communities, including one northwestern Oregon county where future embryos are in line for a spot at Amy Atkinson’s nursery and preschool.</p> <p>“We have children that have not been implanted yet that are on our waitlist,” said Atkinson, referring to in vitro fertilization. “It’s desperation.”</p> <p>Just past Bumble Art Studio's rainbow-painted entryway, cubbies are filled with diapers and tiny backpacks. Every crib and little plastic chair is spoken for in the only licensed center offering infant care in Oregon's historic port town of Astoria, where the wide mouth of the Columbia River flows into the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>Parents trying to enroll children in the facility can spend months or even years on a 40-family waitlist.</p> <p>From Oregon to New York, demand for child care far exceeds supply. Families are growing increasingly desperate as providers deal with staffing shortages exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic as well as historically low pay worsened by inflation.</p> <p>“I haven’t even been able to answer my phone because it’s been nonstop,” said Angie Jannusch, the center’s co-director along with Atkinson. “We keep taking all of the emails and dumping them into a waitlist folder ... we’re busting at the seams. There’s nothing available.”</p> <p>Half of U.S. residents live in child care deserts where fewer than a third of children have access to a slot at a licensed facility, according to the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank that has published reports on the issue. Access challenges have forced many parents to change jobs, reduce their hours or quit altogether.</p> <p>When Capri Jackson’s son was born in March, she had to leave her job at a victim services agency in Colville, a rural town of about 5,000 in northeastern Washington state.</p> <p>“There is not a single certified child care space,” Jackson said. “We hear that child care is hard to find, but not that it’s not actually existent.”</p> <p>The coronavirus pandemic shone a spotlight on the national child care crisis as an estimated 10% of the country’s programs shuttered. Between December 2019 and March 2021, about 16,000 programs permanently closed across 37 states, according to a report from Child Care Aware of America, a national network of child care resources and referral agencies.</p> <p>Oregon is among 11 states where at least 60% of residents live in a child care desert, according to Center for American Progress data. Utah ranks highest, with 77%.</p> <p>Experts warn that restricted reproductive care with Roe v. Wade overturned could further strain a system already pushed to the brink.</p> <p>“We have an especially dire situation when it comes to infant-toddler care,” said Linda Smith, director of the early childhood initiative at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a nonprofit public policy think tank. “Adding more infants into this unmet need is just going to make the problem worse.”</p> <p>Child care deserts are disproportionately in low-income urban and rural communities. In cities, day cares tend to be concentrated in wealthier neighborhoods and costs can be exorbitant, the Center for American</p>

Progress has found. But rural shortages are more likely and more acute — many communities have no child care facilities at all. A 2018 report by the center found that 59% of rural communities are child care deserts, compared to 56% of urban and 44% of suburban communities.

Jeanine Conboy runs one of two licensed, full-time day cares in northeastern Oregon's rural Gilliam County, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island where wheat fields and rangeland stretch across the Columbia Plateau.

Conboy's center in the small town of Condon is full and the waitlist is double her capacity. On the five days a year she closes for teacher training, "there's no one else — we are it here," Conboy said.

Those closures ripple throughout the community.

"That means our public transportation department doesn't run that day," said Elizabeth Farrar Campbell, Gilliam County's judge and commission chair. "We are so interconnected."

Low pay and lack of benefits are fueling the nationwide shortage, as providers scramble to retain workers.

The median hourly wage for child care workers is \$11.43, according to May 2021 figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Starbucks, Target and Amazon offer a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for entry-level positions with no certification requirements. Providers are struggling to match those wages in a tight post-pandemic labor market.

Bumble in Astoria pays its 14 employees \$17 to \$20 an hour in an attempt to help them afford basic needs. But that means higher parent fees: \$1,600 a month for full-time infant care, topping \$19,000 for a year.

With inflation at a 40-year high, many parents are facing a dilemma — they can't find child care, but they can't afford to stay home.

The national average cost of child care is \$10,174 a year, more than 10% of the median income for a married couple in 2020, according to Child Care Aware of America. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers child care affordable if it does not exceed 7% of a household's income.

Second-grade teacher Maddy Buoy is unable to find care in the small rural town of Knappa, about 15 miles (22.5 kilometers) east of Astoria along the Columbia River. Her husband works nights at Domino's Pizza so they can trade off watching their 2-year-old son.

"A day care bill is a mortgage right now," she said.

To address the shortage, counties and states have leaned on federal emergency coronavirus funds. Commissioners in Clatsop County, home to Astoria and Knappa, voted to spend \$500,000 of their federal relief money on child care. The money will finance new grants to help providers retain staff, expand capacity and improve access for families.

The \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill passed by Congress last year included \$39 billion to stabilize child care, sending a lifeline to many providers. But much of the funding expires in 2024.

President Joe Biden's Build Back Better act initially proposed investing \$400 billion in child care. But the final budget reconciliation package he signed in August, after being pared down to the much slimmer Inflation Reduction Act, contained no funding for it at all.

"It's hard to imagine lawmakers would advance an effort to ease the burden of inflation on working families that fails to address the single largest expense many families face: child care," Sarah Rittling, executive director of the advocacy group First Five Years Fund, said in a statement in July when the Senate revealed the details of the final bill.

	<p>Meanwhile, many states have sought to tackle the problem.</p> <p>Earlier this year, Oregon lawmakers approved \$100 million in child care spending. Montana Gov. Gianforte and state public health officials announced \$18 million in grants for areas known to be child care deserts. In New York, where an estimated 64% of residents live in a child care desert, lawmakers passed a budget that includes \$7 billion in child care funding over the next four years that will, in part, raise the income cap to get financial assistance. In New Mexico, voters in November will be asked to amend the state's constitution to increase public funding for early education.</p> <p>But those efforts have yet to reach many parents as the pandemic continues to worsen the national child care shortage.</p> <p>In Gearhart, a town of 1,900 residents about 14 miles south of Astoria, Karli Neilson takes time off and works part-time so that she can watch her 2-year-old son. She hasn't been able to find formal care since he was born.</p> <p>"It just got to be like a part-time job just doing the research and trying to find a place," Neilson said. "Child care issues probably cause me more anxiety than anything else ever has in my life."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Who won the pandemic? Not even close</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/who-won-the-pandemic-in-our-state-its-not-even-close/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/who-won-the-pandemic-in-our-state-its-not-even-close/</a>
GIST	<p>Now that the coronavirus pandemic has wound down, morphing into a regular feature of our lives, it's possible to look back and see which parts of our state and nation handled it well. And which did not.</p> <p>Who won the pandemic? In our state, it's not even close.</p> <p>San Juan County, a group of islands in the northwest part of the state, didn't just survive COVID-19 better than anywhere else. It evaded the disease eight times better than the next best place, Jefferson County, which is out on the Olympic Peninsula.</p> <p>Measured by the ultimate marker of pandemic success — the death rate — San Juan County, population 17,850, ranks as the second-best county on the West Coast, and among the top dozen in the nation.</p> <p>The San Juans also had the lowest hospitalization rate in the state, by far, even though it's one of the older counties demographically (35% of its people are 65 or older).</p> <p>"For the first two years, we had the lowest case rate in the United States," says San Juan's health director, Dr. Frank James. "You're the first person in the media who has called to ask us how we did it."</p> <p>I'll get back to that last part in a minute. It speaks to whether society intends to gain any wisdom from the pandemic years. Or just try to forget what a debacle it was.</p> <p>So how'd the San Juans do it? For starters, they are islands, which James says gave them a built-in virus management advantage. It's also a relatively homogeneous population.</p> <p>But the story of what happened there isn't just geographic luck. The county with the highest death rate in Washington state, Ferry County, has less than half the people of the San Juans, and is more remote. The reality is the novel virus eventually infiltrated every corner of every state. (Example: The North Slope Borough, up on the Arctic Ocean in Alaska, reports a COVID death rate more than 10 times higher than the San Juans'.)</p> <p>It turns out James, the health director, also teaches public health at the University of Washington. One of his courses there happens to cover past pandemics.</p>



“When the coronavirus started to hit back in 2020, I thought ‘Oh, let’s see if we can borrow from history,’” he says.

Long story shortened: The San Juans imposed the first mask mandate in the state, and possibly the first one in the nation. When the sheriff told James he couldn’t enforce it due to lack of manpower, James turned to the businesses to impose it instead.

“It was a huge ask of the businesses, and very contentious at first,” he says. “But they are pillars in this community. When they came around to it, it was like we had deputized all these respected people to help us. So wearing masks really caught on here, right in March 2020, earlier than anywhere else.”

They also recruited volunteers and started an aggressive contact tracing system to isolate any outbreaks. Because cases were relatively low (due to the masks, James believes), this system didn’t get overwhelmed until well after vaccines became available in 2021.

At the same time, James suggests they were careful not to push too far. Some residents wanted a quarantine — to close the ferries, shutting the islands off from society. The county decided that would be crippling for the fragile island economy, so they kept the ferries running.

Ironically the San Juans are one of the least vaccinated places for childhood diseases. Against COVID it became [the most vaccinated county in Washington](#), at 83%, and more than 95% for its seniors.

Bottom line: By the time of the [San Juans’ first death](#), in January 2022, the state had already suffered 11,000 deaths, the nation more than 875,000.

The virus crashed through eventually. Suddenly this spring towns that had mostly evaded it were reporting the [highest case rates in the state](#). By then most everyone had been vaccinated and boosted, “so it didn’t end up causing the severe disease that was experienced by almost every other community in the U.S.,” James says.

The islands’ grand total of two deaths, one in January and one in March of this year, were among unvaccinated residents, the health department says.

Businesses in the islands suffered mightily at times, as did schools and other institutions. It wasn’t a cost-free strategy, James said. Health workers there did get some death threats and protests, too, though it was more muted.

“I think for all the hardship, people came to feel they were living in a refuge, both from COVID and from the ideological insanity of what was going on around the country,” James said. “The community wasn’t as fractured as it was in many other places.”

The counties with the highest death rates bring up the rear in getting vaccinated. Ferry County is still only 43% vaccinated. Its neighbor Stevens County remains the least vaxxed place in the state, at 36%, despite 158 deaths and a rate nearly 30 times that of the San Juans.

The tragedy is that [most of the deaths in these counties](#) happened *after* vaccination became widely available.

“The whole story of the pandemic in the United States is how terribly we did with it,” James said. “Was the suffering and death preventable? Not all of it, no. But most of it was. Look at San Juan County.”

Will people look? Most of what’s cited above is anecdotal — the cause-and-effect hasn’t been formally studied. But I haven’t seen much interest in after-action reports. America, satisfied with itself against all odds, is moving on.

Congrats are due to the San Juans, though. It was a hollow cliché to say that we were all in it together. They really kind of were.

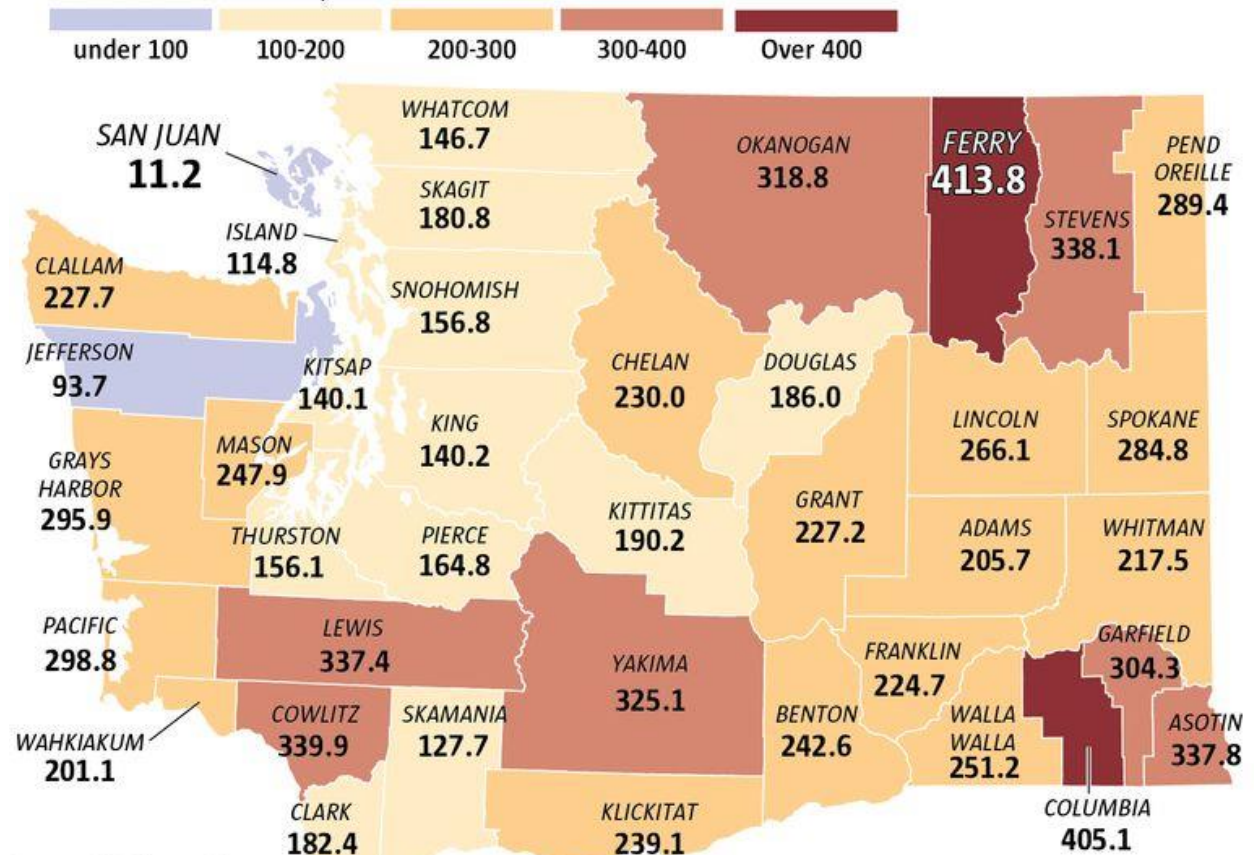
There are no winners of a pandemic, of course. Only losers and survivors. But the San Juans showed others a little how to come through one for next time, if they wish to see.

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## State of the pandemic

San Juan County has by far the best record handling the COVID disease in the pandemic to date. Shown are the rates of COVID death from the beginning of the pandemic through Monday in deaths per 100,000 residents.

### COVID DEATHS PER 100,000 POPULATION



Sources: Washington State Department of Health, Office of Financial Management (2021 population estimates)

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

HEADLINE	10/12 Tribes lead effort to restore salmon habitat
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/puget-sound-salmon-habitat-restored-with-tribes-leading-the-way/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/puget-sound-salmon-habitat-restored-with-tribes-leading-the-way/</a>
GIST	<p>Tacky mud clung to Daryl Williams' black tennis shoes as he walked alongside a freshly dug channel on the east side of Interstate 5 south of Marysville. Nearby, long-billed dowitchers plunged their beaks into the muck in search of bugs.</p> <p>In the early 1900s, this land was diked and drained to create farmland. Williams, environmental liaison for the Tulalip Tribes, recalls coming here as a kid to pick strawberries.</p> <p>Now, excavators chip away at one of the last remaining agricultural dikes. Gradually, some of the first flows in a century began to spill into what is now known as the Blue Heron Slough. The last of four breaches on Steamboat and Union sloughs should be done by mid-October, allowing the historical tidal channels, marsh and mud flats to breathe again.</p>

Blue herons are nesting in the willow trees. Silvery feeder fish are finding their way back into the shallow channels. Open these places up, and fish will find their way, said Joshua Chamberlin, research ecologist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

At 353 acres, the [Port of Everett's Blue Heron Slough](#) restoration project is among the largest along the Puget Sound. Near completion, the project joins two nearby restoration projects at [Smith Island](#) and [Qwuloolt](#) marsh to create over 1,000 acres of recovered estuary.

At the center of this effort is an attempt to restore struggling salmon populations.

Juvenile Chinook salmon rely on lower estuary habitat to gear up for survival. Here, fish go through a process where their scales harden and change. They prepare to head into a different ecosystem — the ocean — and the most dangerous time of their life thus far.

If there's not access to enough estuary habitat, fish get pushed right into the marine environment and their survival rate plummets, Chamberlin said.

It's not uncommon to see Coast Salish tribes like the Tulalips at the forefront of these efforts, which are a part of broader efforts to encourage salmon recovery.

"We as tribal people see our role in the environment, generally, in a fundamentally different way than nontribal people do," said Ryan Miller, director of treaty rights for the Tulalip Tribes. "In our culture and our way of life, we see ourselves as an integral part of the environment. And we have a role to play — to help manage the landscape and the environment in a way that perpetuates the species."

#### **What's next?**

In 2015, the Tulalip Tribes helped usher in the first tidal flows in over a century at the Qwuloolt estuary, not far from where the Snohomish River pours into Puget Sound. Excavators breached a levee that was installed by early settlers.

Just two years after the \$20 million project wrapped up, Tulalip ecologists estimated upward of 10,000 Chinook made their return to the marshy passageways.

At the time, it was considered the state's [second-largest estuary restoration project](#).

Since then, the question for Brett Shattuck, senior restoration scientist for the Tulalip Tribes, has been, "What's next?"

Over the years, about 85% of the "vital estuary habitat" in the Snohomish River delta was disconnected, primarily for agriculture. That accounts for the potential loss of up to 1.6 million Chinook smolt annually, according to a 2020 [report by the Northwest Treaty Tribes](#).

It's a similar story across the region, where agricultural interests have at times been at odds with salmon habitat.

What has happened in the Snohomish River delta has been replicated at other northern rivers, including the Nooksack, Samish, Stillaguamish and Skagit deltas. The Puget Sound Partnership, a state agency, has reported that these areas "have experienced the greatest absolute loss of tidal wetlands and recovery at the Puget Sound."

Today, local and state agencies have found some workarounds that aim to balance salmon habitat and the viability of local agriculture.

In King County, the [Fish, Farm, Flood](#) advisory committee recommends projects in the Snoqualmie Valley that seek to balance those needs. In Snohomish County, the [Sustainable Lands Strategy](#) looks at about 10-

mile stretches of rivers and estuary and offers proposals that would generate “net gains” for agriculture and salmon.

### **Seeking federal support**

Crushed gravel and brittle grass crunched beneath the feet of Eric Day, Swinomish tribal senator, as he walked along the western bank of the Swinomish Channel, a piece of the [Skagit River delta](#) near the Highway 20 bridge. He wore a cedar headband adorned with two miniature carved canoes.

“What you’re looking at — even though it looks like a relatively dry field now — it’s actually very important juvenile fish habitat,” said Devin Smith, director of habitat restoration at the Skagit River System Cooperative.

Recently, Day and other conservation advocates led U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen on a tour of what once was a marshy tangle of creeks and wetlands. That remained mostly true until 1937, when the Army Corps of Engineers diked and drained over 900 acres of tideland along the channel.

The Swinomish tribal community has leased the land to farmers for years. They say they don’t want to disrupt the needs of agriculture, but they’re giving back a portion of the land for salmon.

Project leaders are hoping Larsen can help secure federal money to breach the dike and [restore the historical channel alignment](#). It’s a multimillion-dollar ask that would bring back about 120 acres of salmon habitat. Active farmland will be safeguarded by a new dike.

On behalf of the [Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe](#) and the [Swinomish Indian Tribal Community](#), the Skagit River System Cooperative is piecing back together critical salmon habitat within the tribes’ usual and accustomed fishing areas.

Since the early 2000s the co-op has been breathing life back into miles of the Smokehouse tidal channels and salt marsh on the Swinomish reservation, by dredging and using tide gates. Today, those salty waterways are once again being visited by some juvenile Chinook, Dungeness crab and other species.

Just in the past few decades, six pocket estuary sites have been restored near Swinomish, increasing the estimated Chinook smolt production by about 48,000.

And by 2020, over 480 acres were recovered in the Stillaguamish River basin, and over 1,300 in the Snohomish River basin.

There is still a real estuary capacity issue in the Skagit River basin, said Chamberlin, the NOAA ecologist. Millions of juvenile fish are forced to travel straight through to the salt water.

### **“The salmon sacrifices itself to us”**

The Blue Heron Slough project was first envisioned in the 1990s, when the Port of Everett bought the property from Biringer Farms with estuary restoration in mind.

Not much happened for years, said Williams, environmental liaison for the Tulalip Tribes.

It took a court settlement in the late 2010s to put details to a \$20 million effort to restore 9 miles of channels. That case involved the Port of Everett, who owned the property, and a group that called themselves the Port Gardner Bay Trustees.

The trustees include the Tulalip Tribes and Suquamish Tribe and NOAA, as well as the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Removing culverts, levees and dikes to restore rivers and estuarine habitats are more or less stopgaps until more drastic restoration efforts — like breaching the four Lower Snake River Dams — can be

accomplished, said Miller, the Tulalip Tribes treaty rights officer. Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray said it isn't politically feasible to remove the four dams now, in large part because of the renewable energy the dams create.

"It's a question of values," Miller said. "If we're serious about what we say — we want to save salmon, we want to save southern resident killer whales — then some sacrifices have to be made."

Suquamish Tribal Chair Leonard Forsman said restoring salmon habitat means restoring access to Coast Salish people's culture.

Like feeding the southern resident killer whales, who are emblazoned on the Tulalip Tribes' flag and seal. The current population of southern residents rely on Chinook for about 80% of their diet.

"We have this relationship with the killer whales, our relatives," Miller said. "We have an oral story that tells us about how that relationship was a benefit to both species."

Swinomish Tribal Chair Steve Edwards, 61, learned to fish in the Swinomish Channel.

"Throughout the channel there used to be salmon," he said, walking along the west bank recently. Over the years, Edwards said, fewer and fewer fish found their way back.

Salmon, sometimes prepared by Day, the Swinomish senator, are served to elders at the Swinomish senior center. They're a sign of restored food sovereignty, or the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food, said Valentino Villaluz, Swinomish hunting and gathering program manager.

In June, Tulalip tribal elder and lifelong fisherman Glen Gobin led a procession of drummers to the shore of Tulalip Bay. It was the tribes' annual salmon ceremony, a tradition that honors the return of yubəč, or Chinook.

The ceremony is based around the idea that "the salmon sacrifices itself to us, so that we can be sustained," said Miller, "and we make this guarantee to them that as a thank you that we're always going to take care of the habitat, and all the things that are necessary for them to be sustained."

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 UW librarians, press workers 1-day strike</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/uw-libraries-press-staff-call-one-day-strike-as-negotiations-stall/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/uw-libraries-press-staff-call-one-day-strike-as-negotiations-stall/</a>
GIST	<p>University of Washington librarians and staff will strike on Thursday, calling for better wages and working conditions more than a year after entering contract negotiations with the university.</p> <p>SEIU 925, which about 120 library and press workers joined in June 2021, said that 97.1% of its members who voted on Tuesday authorized a one-day strike. Talks have stalled over cost-of-living pay increases.</p> <p>Librarians, professional staff and press workers from all three UW campuses will picket outside the main campus in Seattle.</p> <p>University libraries staff, many them working overtime and weekends, make about \$20,000 less per year, on average, than staff at peer institutions, said Conor Casey, head of labor archives and a member of the bargaining team.</p> <p>He said it's been disappointing to see the administration's repeated refusals to bargain.</p> <p>"They're determined to let us bleed out," Casey said.</p> <p>Administrative leaders have stalled negotiation efforts, gone to meetings unprepared or failed to respond to proposals, said Binah Palmer, union spokesperson, in a release.</p>



University spokesperson Victor Balta said Wednesday that the university was surprised by the decision to strike while in “good-faith-negotiations.” There is a “considerable” distance, Balta said, between UW and some of the union’s proposals, such as the proposed wage increase and another that asks for a 30-hour work week.

According to Balta, the union is asking for a salary increase of 16.5%.

Jason Sokoloff, head of UW’s Business Library, said workers want an increase in the median salary to bring UW in line with similar institutions, and to create a salary structure that guarantees equity across different jobs.

Sokoloff said he compared salaries across UW peer institutions, or those of similar size and in similar regions, and found UW was 11th out of 23 and dropped to No. 22 when cost of living was applied.

After bargaining began, Sokoloff compared salaries across the six public universities in the state and found that UW was No. 5, just ahead of Washington State University.

Allee Manheim, a public service librarian, said in a statement she voted to strike because she wants to work for the university she learned of during her job interview, not one that doesn’t “respect” workers enough to bargain or discuss real proposals.

Staff feel disheartened to see many colleagues, many of whom were among the few people of color working at the Libraries and Press, leave for better pay elsewhere, according to Palmer, who said pay hasn’t kept up with the increased cost of living.

“We understand we’re privileged,” Casey said, adding that even then, workers deserve a wage that reflects the importance of their work.

Efforts to organize began on a small scale in the summer of 2019, Casey said.

Since then, about 15% of staff have left, he said. The administration talks about efforts to retain workers and make the library system more diverse and equitable, Casey said, but a fair wage is part of that.

Workers might vote again on a potential longer strike, Casey said.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Seattle, SPD leadership failure led to CHOP</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/city-and-spd-leadership-failures-amplified-chop-dangers-report-says/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/city-and-spd-leadership-failures-amplified-chop-dangers-report-says/</a>
GIST	<p>Poor communication, deception, bad judgment and a lack of city and police leadership contributed to tension, violence and two deaths during summer 2020 protests in Seattle, according to a scathing review of the city’s response to the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest zone.</p> <p>The 81-page report released Tuesday by the SPD’s Office of Inspector General is the third in <a href="#">a series of reviews</a> of the police department’s response to the racial unrest following the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. It focuses on 23 days in June: beginning when the SPD suddenly abandoned its East Precinct, leading to the formation of an eight-block “cop-free” zone on Capitol Hill, and ending two days after the shooting death of a 16-year-old boy — the area’s second homicide in days.</p> <p>The first review focused on the need for SPD to <a href="#">revise its crowd control policies</a>, and the second focused on <a href="#">rebuilding community trust</a>.</p> <p>In the third installment, the office concluded the unprecedented occupation revealed a deeply dysfunctional relationship between the city administration and police department. The OIG also found</p>

leadership failures within the SPD, including incidents where department brass misled the public, exaggerated dangers posed by protesters in order to justify leaving the precinct and [employed a racist ruse](#) in an apparent attempt to frighten and intimidate thousands of Black Lives Matter protesters.

The ruse involved fake radio chatter on public channels warning that [an armed group of Proud Boys](#) — a far-right group with a reputation for street violence — was gathering downtown and heading toward Capitol Hill. As a result, some protesters armed themselves and prepared for violence.

“Lying to the community in this way was not only contrary to policy, but it was also a poorly considered tactic contributing to the tensions in the CHOP,” the report said, referencing the Capitol Hill protest zone.

“Many panelists viewed this incident as an example of the way structural and internalized racism can coalesce in police decision-making and cause harm to the community.”

The OIG serves as an oversight and accountability mechanism for the civilian-run Office of Police Accountability, which investigates allegations of police misconduct. The report notes that the OPA “did not fully acknowledge and explore issues of potential racial bias or systemic racism” when it reviewed the ruse and determined it was improper.

The OIG also raised concerns about the decisions by police and Seattle Fire Department medics to stand by at the CHOP perimeter after two fatal shootings, leaving treatment and transportation of the victims to volunteer medics and private vehicles while trained medical responders and ambulances were just blocks away.

The report also reviewed the impact of the decision to pull police protection on Capitol Hill residents and merchants, who “expressed concern and frustration with the lack of an organized response to the CHOP, as well as the delay or lack of response to 911 calls.”

The OIG and its panel of reviewers — which included police officers, community members, protesters and others — examined the SPD’s and city’s response to key incidents during CHOP:

- The June 8 decision to abandon the SPD’s East Precinct, which led to the occupation;
- Incidents on June 8 and June 10 where SPD lied or misled the public about the threat to officers and the public — the first involving the Proud Boy ruse, and the second involving unsubstantiated police statements about CHOP crime;
- The impact of the CHOP on Capitol Hill businesses and residents;
- Two fatal shootings on June 20 and 29.

The panel identified 54 contributing factors that led to those incidents, and made 34 recommendations to the city and police, including the need for SPD to do its job “despite criticism and anger from the community.”

“The response by SPD to the CHOP was characterized by a lack of evolution in response to a protest which had changed from a demonstration to an occupy-style movement,” wrote Inspector General Lisa Judge. “SPD personnel made several public statements, the accuracy of which was questioned by the community. Other tactical decisions made by SPD and the City further undermined public trust and safety and neither SPD nor the City was able to communicate effectively with the protesters or other community members in the area.”

The key issue, however, was a lack of “transparency and accountability” in decision-making and overall poor communication, including incidents when city and police officials gave the public misleading or false information, further undermining the SPD’s credibility after days of violent clashes between police and protesters.

The King County Sheriff’s Office, at the request of Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg, later opened a criminal investigation into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of text messages from the



phones of city officials, including then-Mayor Jenny Durkan and then-police Chief Carmen Best, during the CHOP and the East Precinct desertion. That investigation is ongoing.

Police said during a June 10, 2020, news conference that CHOP leaders were extorting area business owners, protesters were stopping citizens at armed checkpoints and intelligence indicated the East Precinct could be burned down after one attempt was thwarted.

The OIG panel concluded that intelligence — a threat assessment from the FBI — was overstated. Police knew the checkpoint and extortion claims were false but continued to repeat them, hurting the SPD's reputation and souring community trust, the OIG said.

Meanwhile, efforts by SPD and others in city government to communicate and negotiate with CHOP protesters were stymied by the “horizontal, leaderless-style” of the protest.

Business owners, many of whom supported the protesters' cause, complained of mostly minor crime, inconveniences and first responders' reluctance to attend to emergencies. The city now faces [a proposed class-action lawsuit by Capitol Hill business owners](#) alleging losses due to the city's mismanagement of the CHOP.

Violence and crime, issues from the CHOP's outset, escalated until the night of June 30, when 19-year-old [Lorenzo Anderson was shot multiple times](#) during an altercation. He was taken to a medic tent near Cal Anderson Park in the CHOP where civilian medics tried to stop his bleeding. Medics and firefighters — just blocks away outside of the CHOP — refused to respond to several 911 calls without a police escort, citing Fire Department policy.

Anderson was eventually loaded into the back of a truck and driven to Harborview Medical Center, where he died. [His father has since sued, alleging the city's leaders failed his son.](#)

The deadly shooting prompted Durkan to begin moving to shut down the CHOP, but her initial attempts were met with resistance. Then, early June 29, someone in a white Jeep was reported to have fired shots toward Cal Anderson Park. As the vehicle approached a set of barricades on Pine Street, people believed to be armed, self-appointed CHOP security guards [opened fire, killing the 16-year-old driver and wounding his 14-year-old passenger.](#)

Two days later, police moved through the area and expelled the protesters.

“SPD officers are expected to be public safety professionals, ready to protect and serve the community,” the report concludes. “The community expectations transcend the circumstances of any particular moment, including situations where SPD is criticized or community members reject their presence as unjust and hurtful.”

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HEADLINE	10/12 FDA clears Covid boosters for 5-11yr-olds
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/fda-clears-updated-covid-boosters-for-kids-as-young-as-5/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/fda-clears-updated-covid-boosters-for-kids-as-young-as-5/</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. on Wednesday authorized updated COVID-19 boosters for children as young as 5, seeking to expand protection ahead of an expected winter wave.</p> <p>Tweaked boosters rolled out for Americans 12 and older last month, doses modified to target today's most common and contagious omicron relative. While there wasn't a big rush, federal health officials are urging that people seek the extra protection ahead of holiday gatherings.</p> <p>Now the Food and Drug Administration has given a green light for elementary school-age kids to get the updated booster doses, too — one made by Pfizer for 5- to 11-year-olds, and a version from rival Moderna for those as young as 6.</p>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends how vaccines are used, also signed off.

Americans may be tired of repeated calls to get boosted against COVID-19 but experts say the updated shots have an advantage: They contain half the recipe that targeted the original coronavirus strain and half protection against the dominant BA.4 and BA.5 omicron versions.

These combination or “bivalent” boosters are designed to broaden immune defenses so that people are better protected against serious illness whether they encounter an omicron relative in the coming months — or a different mutant that’s more like the original virus.

“We want to have the best of both worlds,” Pfizer’s Dr. Bill Gruber, a pediatrician, told The Associated Press. He hopes the updated shots will “re-energize interest in protecting children for the winter.”

The updated boosters are “extremely important” for keeping kids healthy and in school, said Dr. Jason Newland, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Washington University in St. Louis.

Parents should know “there is no concern from the safety perspective with the bivalent vaccines, whether Moderna or Pfizer,” Newland added.

Only people who’ve gotten their initial vaccinations — with any of the original-formula versions — qualify for an updated booster. That means about three-fourths of Americans 12 and older are eligible. As of last weekend, only at least 13 million had gotten an updated booster, White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha estimated Tuesday.

To pediatricians’ chagrin, getting children their first vaccinations has been tougher. Less than a third of 5- to 11-year-olds have had their two primary doses and thus would qualify for the new booster.

This age group will get kid-size doses of the new omicron-targeting booster — and they can receive it at least two months after their last dose, whether that was their primary vaccination series or an earlier booster, the FDA said.

“Vaccination remains the most effective measure to prevent the severe consequences of COVID-19,” Dr. Peter Marks, FDA’s vaccine chief, said in a statement.

While children tend to get less seriously ill than adults, “as the various waves of COVID-19 have occurred, more children have gotten sick with the disease and have been hospitalized,” Marks said.

For the updated booster made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech, 5- to 11-year-olds would get a third of the dose that anyone 12 and older already receives. Pfizer said it could ship up to 6 million kid-sized doses within a week of authorization, in addition to ongoing shipments of adult-sized doses.

Until now, Moderna’s updated booster was cleared only for adults. FDA just expanded that adult bivalent dosage to 12- to 17-year-olds, and authorized half the dose for kids ages 6 to 11.

As for even younger tots, first vaccinations didn’t open for the under-5 age group until mid-June — and it will be several more months before regulators decide if they’ll also need a booster using the updated recipe.

Exactly how much protection does an updated COVID-19 booster shot offer? That’s hard to know. Pfizer and Moderna are starting studies in young children.

But the FDA cleared the COVID-19 booster tweaks without requiring human test results — just like it approves yearly changes to flu vaccines. That’s partly because both companies already had studied experimental shots tweaked to target prior COVID-19 variants, including an earlier omicron version, and found they safely revved up virus-fighting antibodies.

	<p>“It’s clearly a better vaccine, an important upgrade from what we had before,” Jha said earlier this week.</p> <p>Jha urged adults to get their updated shot in October — like they get flu vaccinations — or at least well before holiday gatherings with high-risk family and friends. People who’ve recently had COVID-19 still need the booster but can wait about three months, he added.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Feel cruddy? Flu or Covid? Why it matters</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/youre-feeling-cruddy-is-it-flu-covid-heres-why-it-matters/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/youre-feeling-cruddy-is-it-flu-covid-heres-why-it-matters/</a>
GIST	<p><i>Bay Area News Group</i> - If you’re feeling <i>really</i> cruddy right now, join the crowd. Yes, you might have COVID. Yet again, this time it might be the flu — or just a really bad cold that is making the rounds.</p> <p>Figuring out why you’re sick is a bit more complicated this fall amid myriad circulating viruses.</p> <p>Flu season is off to an early start. And as we head toward a third winter of the COVID pandemic, experts say the trend that has emerged in the first two years is likely to continue: The weather gets colder, preparations for the holidays ramp up, and COVID cases will start to rise, too.</p> <p>So in our always complicated shifting effort to stay healthy, here are some answers to your latest questions.</p> <p><b>Q.</b> We hear about “flu season” every winter. Is there also a “COVID season” now?  <b>A.</b> Influenza transmission follows <a href="#">strong seasonal patterns</a>, tracked carefully by public health experts well before the current pandemic. Now COVID might be falling into a similar, though less-predictable, seasonal pattern as well.</p> <p>During the first winter of the pandemic, in January 2021, California recorded what was then an all-time-high case rate. The next year, in late 2021 and early 2022, we had the worst surge we have seen so far, in large part because of the omicron variant’s increased transmissibility.</p> <p>“It was the perfect storm,” said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, a University of California, San Francisco, professor of medicine who specializes in infectious diseases.</p> <p>And this year might follow suit. “Right now we have the right time of year,” Chin-Hong cautions, “and we may have variants that have legs.”</p> <p><b>Q.</b> How concerned should we be about another winter COVID surge?  <b>A.</b> Chin-Hong said he is most worried about a variant that is showing rapid growth in Europe, commonly referred to as BF.7. “It may be the most immune-invasive of the lot,” he said, but a large surge is far from certain, and there are other variants of concern that could emerge.</p> <p>Dr. Bob Wachter, chair of UCSF’s Department of Medicine, also expects a surge. “It almost certainly will go up this winter for one of the reasons that flu goes up,” he said. “People go inside more, and there is more opportunity for spread.” He points out that while we may have seen our worst surges so far in the winter, “counting on seasonality is dicier than it is with the flu.”</p> <p>Cases in the United States have yet to start spiking, but COVID testing is also at new lows, and the switch to weekly rather than daily reporting by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and many local and state health departments might give us less of a warning than we had during previous winter surges.</p> <p>But Wachter is optimistic the surge won’t break records. “It feels unlikely to be a huge surge, given the population immunity,” but he’s also wary to make predictions at all. “As far as I can tell, it’s all pretty unpredictable at this point.”</p>

**Q.** Should I worry about catching the flu this year?

**A.** Simply put: Yes! The flu is heading for an early rise, with positivity rates for flu testing increasing fivefold from mid-August to early October in the country. New York is showing signs of an early and rough flu season, according to Chin-Hong. "It's coming earlier," he said, "and there is already much more than last year at this time."

Chin-Hong says that while the population seems to be getting stronger when it comes to COVID, two years of lower-than-normal flu activity means our population, especially the very young and the very old, are even more susceptible than before to getting very sick with influenza this year.

**Q.** Isn't COVID more dangerous than the flu?

**A.** COVID killed more Americans in 2020 than the flu killed during the entire decade of flu seasons before that, and 2021 COVID deaths were even higher.

But this winter, for those who are up to date on COVID vaccinations, flu might be a worse bug to kick. "At this point COVID is not any more severe than the flu," Wachter said. "When people said that two years ago, it was a lie meant to minimize the impact of COVID." But now? "As a reasonably healthy guy, with five (COVID) vaccine shots, the chances of me dying of the flu are greater."

New vaccinations, current variants that typically cause less severe illness and new successful therapeutics have all dropped the case fatality rate for COVID in the past three years.

But even with a lower mortality rate, COVID is likely to still have a higher death toll than the flu, especially if case rates rival previous years. Most of our immunity has waned from previous omicron surges, and many people are not up to date on their vaccinations.

**Q.** What should I do if I start to feel sick?

**A.** If you start feeling extra run down, a cough or a tickle in your throat, the confluence of COVID and flu season might complicate your path to recovery. "Symptoms are merging more and more," Chin-Hong said.

It can be harder to tell if you have COVID right away, so testing is important, especially because early detection means you can get prescribed more effective treatments such as the antiviral Paxlovid, if you are eligible.

Wachter said if he starts feeling sick, he will first take a COVID test right away. If that's negative, he would get tested for influenza and again for COVID in a few days.

Reach out to your medical provider for the best treatment options.

And whether you have COVID, influenza or another virus, you can help prevent transmission by wearing a mask, washing hands and isolating.

One thing we know for certain: Vaccination helps prevent the worst outcomes for both influenza and COVID-19. So don't put off getting your annual flu shot and the latest COVID boosters.

"In a different world, if everyone went out to get the booster, we might have a really mild COVID season," Wachter said, but with fewer than 1 in 10 people getting the newest booster, "that doesn't seem like its going to be the case."

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HEADLINE	10/13 NKorea: cruise missiles for tactical nukes
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/north-korea-south-korea-news-tactical-nuclear-weapons-kim-jong-un-cruise-missile/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/north-korea-south-korea-news-tactical-nuclear-weapons-kim-jong-un-cruise-missile/</a>
GIST	Kim Jong Un supervised the launch of two long-range cruise missiles, state media said Thursday, adding that the weapons had already been deployed to "tactical nuke" units of the North Korean army. Kim has

overseen a blitz of ballistic missile launches in recent weeks, which Pyongyang has [described as tactical nuclear drills](#) that simulated taking out airports and military facilities across South Korea.

The Wednesday test of the two cruise missiles was aimed at "enhancing the combat efficiency" of the weapons, which were "deployed at the units of the Korean People's Army for the operation of tactical nukes," KCNA reported.

The cruise missiles — which travel at lower altitudes than ballistic missiles, making them harder to detect and intercept — flew 1,240 miles over the sea before hitting their targets, the Korean Central News Agency said.

Kim expressed "great satisfaction" with the tests, which he said showed the country's nuclear combat forces were at "full preparedness for actual war" and sent a "clear warning to the enemies," KCNA said.

[North Korea](#) has tested "strategic" cruise missiles before but this is the first time it has said they have a nuclear role and are operational — although analysts question Pyongyang's claims, saying it has not shown it can actually make nuclear warheads small enough.

"North Korea's cruise missiles, air force, and tactical nuclear devices are probably much less capable than propaganda suggests," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"The Kim regime is sometimes surprisingly transparent about weapons development goals, but it also [tends to exaggerate strength and capabilities](#)," he added.

With talks long stalled, and [Ukraine-linked gridlock at the United Nations](#) stymying the chance of fresh sanctions, Kim has doubled down on developing and testing his banned nuclear arsenal. Officials in Seoul and Washington have been warning for months that Pyongyang [is ready to conduct another nuclear test](#) — which would be the country's seventh.

Kim said North Korea will "focus all efforts on the endless and accelerating development of the national nuclear combat armed forces," KCNA reported Thursday.

Pyongyang isn't technically banned by the U.N. from testing cruise missiles, but all ballistic missile launches violate sanctions and are typically flagged by Seoul or Tokyo. Neither had alerted the Wednesday test, but South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said later that he was looking at "various possibilities" for his country and the U.S. to extend their joint measures aimed at deterring a North Korean nuclear or conventional attack.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said Yoon made that remark when questioned Thursday about a newspaper report claiming his government had asked the U.S. about the possibility of a "nuclear-sharing arrangement."

Kim made acquiring tactical nukes — smaller, lighter weapons designed for battlefield use — a top priority at a key party congress in January 2021.

"The latest test means the North is operating tactical nuclear capability on cruise missiles, which are harder to detect for their low-altitude flight," Hong Min of the Korea Institute for National Unification told Agence France Presse.

"It is a testament to Pyongyang's capability to mount nuclear warheads," Hong said, adding that cruise missiles can also have irregular flight paths, which makes them harder to intercept.

North Korea revised its nuclear laws last month to allow preemptive strikes, with Kim declaring North Korea an "irreversible" nuclear power — effectively ending the possibility of negotiations over its arsenal.

	<p>Since then, Seoul, Tokyo and Washington have <a href="#">ramped up combined military exercises</a>, including deploying a nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carrier to the area twice, infuriating Pyongyang, which sees such drills as rehearsals for invasion.</p> <p>In response, North Korea organized drills that it said earlier this week had gamed out hitting South Korea's ports, airports and military command facilities with tactical nukes.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Heavy rain lashes Australia: flood warnings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/flood-warnings-southeast-australia-lashed-heavy-rain-91422377">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/flood-warnings-southeast-australia-lashed-heavy-rain-91422377</a>
GIST	<p>CANBERRA, Australia -- Flood warnings were issued, hundreds of homes were evacuated, thousands more lost power and a man was missing as heavy rain lashed southeast Australia on Thursday.</p> <p>Rivers across Australia's most populous states, New South Wales and Victoria, and the island state of Tasmania were rising dangerously with catchments soaked by months of above-average rainfall.</p> <p>Around 250 homes in the New South Wales city of Forbes, west of Sydney, were ordered to be evacuated by Thursday night ahead of major flooding.</p> <p>The State Emergency Service issued an order for 17 streets including the central downtown precinct to be evacuated by 8 p.m., (0900 GMT) with the Lachlan River expected to reach a major flood peak of 10.6 meters (34 feet, 9 inches) by Friday.</p> <p>Police said a 63-year-old man was last seen on Tuesday on a rural property on the Lachlan River near the New South Wales town of Hillston, west of Sydney. He was reported missing hours later but emergency crews have failed to find any sign of him.</p> <p>Police on Tuesday found the body of a 46-year-old man in his submerged car in floodwater near the city of Bathurst, west of Sydney.</p> <p>To the south in Victoria, emergency crews rescued at least 23 people driving through floodwaters in rural areas after heavy overnight rain, officials said.</p> <p>Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews urged people not to drive or walk into floodwaters.</p> <p>"It's very dangerous for you, and it's also very dangerous for the person who has to come to rescue you," Andrews said.</p> <p>State Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp said the heavy rain would reach metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria's capital and Australia's most populous city after Sydney, late Thursday.</p> <p>Officials have been door-knocking along the Maribyrnong River in inner-Melbourne to ensure residents were ready to evacuate if necessary.</p> <p>"We will see significant rainfall across the metropolitan area and ... see potential for flash flooding," Crisp said.</p> <p>Sarah-Jane Gill, a manager at the Rochester Riverside Holiday Park in the town of Rochester, north of Melbourne, said she had evacuated guests on Thursday as the Campaspe River rose.</p> <p>"It is scary. You laugh in the face of it all, but we're very nervous," Gill said.</p> <p>The Bureau of Meteorology has issued major flood warnings for the Campaspe and another four Victorian waterways.</p>

	<p>The Campaspe's peak at Rochester on Friday could exceed a record 9.12 meters (29 feet, 11 inches) set in 2011. That could flood 250 Rochester homes above the floorboards and isolate another 700 homes, the State Emergency Service said.</p> <p>Nearly 10,000 homes in Victoria were without power overnight, with hundreds yet to be restored, said the State Control Center, which manages Victoria's emergencies, and electricity distributor Powercor.</p> <p>In the northern Tasmanian town of Railton, 90 homes were threatened by floodwaters after overnight rain.</p> <p>The State Emergency Service issued an emergency warning for Railton, urging residents to prepare to evacuate.</p> <p>The state's northern half was on high alert for flash flooding, with heavy rain forecast to continue into Friday morning.</p> <p>State Emergency Service director Leon Smith said flood peaks in northern Tasmania might reach levels last experienced in 2016 when three people drowned.</p> <p>"It is a very dynamic situation that we're monitoring, but inevitably we will see flooding that will have significant consequences," Smith said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Saudis: US sought 1mo. delay OPEC cut</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/saudi-arabia-us-sought-month-delay-opec-decision-91425511">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/saudi-arabia-us-sought-month-delay-opec-decision-91425511</a>
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- Saudi Arabia said Thursday that the U.S. had urged the kingdom to postpone a decision by OPEC and its allies — including Russia — to cut oil production by a month. Such a delay could have helped reduce the risk of a spike in gas prices ahead of the U.S. midterm elections next month.</p> <p>A statement issued by the Saudi Foreign Ministry didn't specifically mention the Nov. 8 elections in which U.S. President Joe Biden is trying to maintain his narrow Democratic majority in Congress. However, it stated that the U.S. "suggested" the cuts be delayed by a month. In the end, OPEC announced the cuts at its Oct. 5 meeting in Vienna.</p> <p>Holding off on cuts would have meant implementing them just before the Nov. 8 election — at a time when they likely couldn't drastically influence prices at the pump.</p> <p>Rising oil prices — and by extension higher gasoline prices — have been a key driver of inflation in the U.S. and around the world, worsening global economic woes as Russia's months-long war on Ukraine also has disrupted global food supplies. For Biden, gasoline prices creeping up could affect voters. He and many lawmakers have warned that America's longtime security-based relationship with the kingdom could be reconsidered.</p> <p>The White House has rejected any attempts to link the OPEC request to the elections, but <a href="#">Saudi Arabia</a> issuing a rare, lengthy statement shows just how tense relations are between the two countries. Ties have been fraught since the 2018 killing and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, which Washington believes came on the orders of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Meanwhile, higher energy prices provide a weapon Russia can use against the West, which has been arming and supporting Ukraine.</p> <p>The statement by the Saudi Foreign Ministry acknowledged that the kingdom had been talking to the U.S. about postponing OPEC's 2 million barrel cut announced last week.</p>



“The government of the kingdom clarified through its continuous consultation with the U.S. administration that all economic analyses indicate that postponing the OPEC+ decision for a month, according to what has been suggested, would have had negative economic consequences,” the ministry said in its statement.

The ministry's statement confirmed a Wall Street Journal article this week that also said the U.S. sought to delay the OPEC+ production cut until just before the midterm elections. The Journal quoted unnamed Saudi officials as describing the move as a political gambit by Biden ahead of the vote.

The kingdom also criticized attempts to link the kingdom's decision to Russia's war on Ukraine.

“The kingdom stresses that while it strives to preserve the strength of its relations with all friendly countries, it affirms its rejection of any dictates, actions, or efforts to distort its noble objectives to protect the global economy from oil market volatility,” it said. “Resolving economic challenges requires the establishment of a non-politicized constructive dialogue, and to wisely and rationally consider what serves the interests of all countries.”

Both Saudi Arabia and the neighboring United Arab Emirates, key producers in OPEC, voted in favor of a United Nations General Assembly resolution Wednesday to condemn Russia’s “attempted illegal annexation” of four Ukrainian regions and demand its immediate reversal.

Once muscular enough to grind the U.S. to a halt with its 1970s oil embargo, OPEC needed non-members like Russia to push through a production cut in 2016 after prices crashed below \$30 a barrel amid rising American production. The 2016 agreement gave birth to the so-called OPEC+, which joined the cartel in cutting production to help stimulate prices.

The coronavirus pandemic briefly saw oil prices go into negative territory before air travel and economic activity rebounded following lockdowns around the world. Benchmark Brent crude sat over \$92 a barrel early Wednesday, but oil-producing nations are worried prices could sharply fall amid efforts to combat inflation.

Biden, who famously called Saudi Arabia a “pariah” during his 2020 election campaign, traveled to the kingdom in July and fist-bumped Prince Mohammed before a meeting. Despite the outreach, the kingdom has been supportive of keeping oil prices high in order to fund Prince Mohammed's aspirations, including his planned \$500 billion futuristic desert city project called Neom.

On Tuesday, Biden warned of repercussions for Saudi Arabia over the OPEC+ decision.

“There’s going to be some consequences for what they’ve done, with Russia,” Biden said. “I’m not going to get into what I’d consider and what I have in mind. But there will be — there will be consequences.”

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Iran kamikaze drones strike Kyiv area</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ukraines-kyiv-area-hit-iranian-made-kamikaze-drones-91427280">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ukraines-kyiv-area-hit-iranian-made-kamikaze-drones-91427280</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine -- Ukraine’s capital region was struck by Iranian-made kamikaze drones early Thursday, officials said, sending rescue workers rushing to the scene as residents awoke to air raid sirens for the fourth consecutive morning following Russia’s major assault across the country earlier this week.</p> <p>Kyiv regional governor Oleksiy Kuleba said the strike occurred in the area around the capital. It wasn't yet clear if there were any casualties.</p> <p>Deputy head of the presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko said on Telegram that “critical infrastructure facilities” in the area were hit, without offering any details on which ones.</p>

In the southern city of Mykolaiv, overnight shelling destroyed a five-story apartment building as fighting continued along Ukraine's southern front.

Mykolaiv regional governor Vitali Kim said that an 11-year-old boy was rescued from under the rubble, where he had spent six hours, and rescuers on Thursday morning were searching for seven more people, Kim said.

He said that the building was hit by an S-300 missile which is ordinarily used for targeting military aircraft, but Russians have apparently been increasingly using them for unprecise ground strikes.

Early morning attacks on Ukraine's southern front have become a daily occurrence in Russia's war as Kyiv's forces push a counteroffensive aimed at recapturing territory occupied by Moscow.

Attacks on Kyiv had become rare before the capital city was hit at least four times during Monday's massive strikes, which killed at least 19 people and wounded more than 100 across the country.

Western leaders this week pledged to send more weapons to Ukraine, including air defense systems and weapons Kyiv has said are critical to defeating the invading Russian forces.

Britain said Thursday that it will provide missiles for advanced NASAM anti-aircraft systems that the Pentagon plans to send to Ukraine in coming weeks. It's also sending hundreds of additional aerial drones for information gathering and logistics support, plus 18 more howitzer artillery guns.

U.K. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said that "these weapons will help Ukraine defend its skies from attacks and strengthen their overall missile defense alongside the U.S. NASAMS."

The systems, which Kyiv has long wanted, will provide medium- to long-range defense against missile attacks.

The offer comes as NATO defense ministers meet in Brussels, aiming to help bolster Ukraine's aerial defenses after Monday's widespread Russian assault.

Ukraine's military said this week that its current air defenses have shot down dozens of incoming Russian missiles and Shahed-136 drones, the so-called kamikaze drones that have played an increasingly deadly role in the war.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Unrest widespread in Jerusalem</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israeli-police-palestinians-clash-east-jerusalem-91426719">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israeli-police-palestinians-clash-east-jerusalem-91426719</a>
GIST	<p>JERUSALEM -- Israeli police fired live rounds, tear gas and stun grenades in widespread Jerusalem street confrontations with Palestinians who threw stones, firecrackers and firebombs. It was the fiercest unrest in the contested city in months.</p> <p>Tensions in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem have been soaring since a suspected Palestinian assailant shot and killed an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint at the entrance to the Shuafat refugee camp earlier this week. Movement in and out of Shuafat, a neglected Jerusalem slum, has been restricted as troops search for the shooter.</p> <p>The overnight street violence appeared to have subsided by Thursday morning, as tens of thousands of Jews were flocking to Jerusalem to celebrate the week-long Sukkot holiday, surging into east Jerusalem's Old City, often a focal point for tensions.</p> <p>The confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinians erupted in more than a dozen neighborhoods of east Jerusalem and areas surrounding it.</p>

	<p>Police said they arrested 23 Palestinians throughout disturbances on Wednesday, half of them minors. Police said masked protesters threw firebombs, stones and fireworks at officers. Video footage released by Israeli police showed a street littered with burning debris and trash bins set alight.</p> <p>Police said in some cases officers used live fire against the protesters. There was no immediate report of injuries.</p> <p>The police manhunt has further disrupted the lives of residents of Shuafat, an area that has long seen neglect at the hands of Israeli authorities. Police initially closed Shuafat's entry and exit points and while they have since reopened, officers are stopping every car moving in and out of the city, triggering snarling traffic jams and disrupting the residents' daily routine.</p> <p>In response, shops, businesses and schools across east Jerusalem closed Wednesday in protest of the police measures and in solidarity with Shuafat.</p> <p>The uptick in violence in the flashpoint city comes amid soaring tensions in the West Bank, where the Israeli military has been carrying out nightly raids since the spring in what it says is an attempt to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks. More than 100 Palestinians have been killed, making this year the deadliest since 2015. Israel says most of those killed were militants, but local youth protesting the incursions and other civilians have also been killed.</p> <p>Israel captured east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, along with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and later annexed that part of the city. It considers the entire city its eternal, undivided capital. The Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state, with Jerusalem's eastern flank as capital.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Hurricane Ian death toll continues to rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-deaths-reported-hurricane-ian-slams-florida/story?id=90693636">https://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-deaths-reported-hurricane-ian-slams-florida/story?id=90693636</a>
GIST	<p>At least 127 people in Florida have died due to Hurricane Ian, according to local officials, as the death toll continues to climb two weeks after the powerful storm slammed into the state's southwestern coast.</p> <p>Five additional people were also reported dead due to the <a href="#">storm</a> in North Carolina, according to the governor's office.</p> <p>The Category 4 storm made landfall in Florida the afternoon of Sept. 28, causing catastrophic damage, fierce winds and dangerous, record-breaking storm surges.</p> <p><b>Deaths from Hurricane Ian reported in Florida</b></p> <p>The deaths span multiple counties in Florida, including 56 in Lee County and 24 in Charlotte County. There were also seven each in Monroe and Sarasota counties; five each in Volusia and Collier counties; four in Hardee County; three each in Manatee and Putnam counties; two each in Hendry, Hillsborough, Orange, Osceola and Polk counties; and one each in DeSoto, Lake and Martin and counties, ABC News has determined based on information from the Florida Medical Examiners Commission and inquiries with local officials and authorities.</p> <p>Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marceno said during a press conference Monday that officers were still conducting more than 600 well-being checks.</p> <p>Hurricane Ian's death toll has been rising amid ongoing search and rescue missions.</p> <p>The causes of the deaths in Florida were primarily drownings, though included vehicle and roofing accidents, officials said.</p>

Confirmed deaths from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement occurred in Lake, Sarasota, Manatee, Volusia and Collier counties between Sept. 27 and 30. The victims ranged in age from 22 to 91. One, a 68-year-old woman, drowned after being swept into the ocean by a wave on Sept. 29, the department said.

The Volusia County Sheriff's Office was among the first to publicly announce a fatality from Ian. A 72-year-old man in Deltona died after attempting to drain his pool during the storm, the office [said Thursday](#). The man, who was not publicly identified, "disappeared" after heading outside, the sheriff's office said. Deputies found him unresponsive in a canal behind the home and he was pronounced dead at a local hospital, the sheriff's office said.

#### **Deaths from Hurricane Ian reported in North Carolina**

The storm made landfall again on Sept. 30 in South Carolina, which has reported no deaths due to the storm so far, Gov. Henry McMaster said Saturday.

Though in neighboring North Carolina, five storm-related deaths have been reported. In a [statement](#) Saturday, Gov. Roy Cooper said three involved vehicle accidents on Sept. 30, with the victims ranging in age from 22 to 25. Additionally, a 65-year-old man died on Oct. 1 from carbon monoxide poisoning after running a generator in his closed garage while the power was out. The manner of the fifth death is unclear.

#### **Hurricane damage across the Southeast, as rescue efforts continue**

Florida Rep. Kathy Castor, who represents the Tampa Bay area, called the situation a "major catastrophe."

"I'm afraid we're going to be dealing with a larger loss of life than we anticipated," she said on ["ABC News Live"](#) on Sept. 29.

Florida Sen. Rick Scott told "Good Morning America" on Sept. 29 there were "thousands of rescue efforts going on right now."

"We've got great sheriff's departments, police departments, fire departments, state rescue teams. They're working hard. But there's a lot of people that need help right now," he said.

He expressed concern for the state's many low-lying areas.

"The water kills and I'm just -- I'm scared to death of, you know, what's happened here and I hope everybody stays safe," he said.

Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marceno [told "Good Morning America"](#) on Sept. 29 they had thousands of 911 calls they were answering in the wake of the storm making landfall.

"It's a real, real rough road ahead," Marceno said.

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## **Cyber, Tech Awareness**

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HEADLINE	10/12 El Paso dashboard to track migrant crisis
SOURCE	<a href="https://nypost.com/2022/10/12/el-paso-launches-online-dashboard-to-track-migrant-crisis/">https://nypost.com/2022/10/12/el-paso-launches-online-dashboard-to-track-migrant-crisis/</a>
GIST	<p>El Paso has launched a new online migrant dashboard as over 60,000 border crossers have passed through the overwhelmed Texas city in the last six months.</p> <p>The city's new <a href="#">Migrant Situational Awareness Dashboard</a> provides weekly statistics on the number of migrant encounters reported by federal agencies as well as data on those released into the community and the number of migrants provided services at El Paso's Migrant Welcome Center.</p>

The new data center was introduced as El Paso has [extended an emergency declaration](#) as it struggles to handle its ongoing migrant crisis as people cross the border in record numbers.

According to the city, more than 62,000 people passed through El Paso from April 2022 to mid-September 2022. In September alone, over 13,000 have passed through El Paso — the highest number the city has experienced.

Agents from US Customs and Border Protection are encountering a weekly average of 2,100 migrants per day, data shows. Approximately 70% of the individuals and family units come from Venezuela.

The city has served over 16,600 migrants at its welcome center, where they are given food, water and assistance to get to their desired destination.

The crisis influx has been a major economic burden for El Paso, [costing the city](#) as much as \$10 million per month, prompting the officials to begin sending migrants to sanctuary cities such as New York and Chicago.

Last month, the City of El Paso was spending \$300,000 a day to shelter, feed and [send asylum-seeking immigrants to New York City](#) — with the blessing of mayor [Eric Adams](#) — as well as Chicago.

City officials said El Paso is chartering nine to 14 buses a day, according to [KFOX](#). The city is expecting \$2 million in federal assistance money to help with the situation.

So far this year, the city has chartered travel for over 12,000 migrants — 9,350 bound for New York City and another 2,664 for Chicago, according to the dashboard.

The number of migrants sent to New York City from Democrat-led El Paso is [double the number of migrants shipped](#) to the Big Apple by Texas GOP Gov. Greg Abbot, accounting for 42% of the migrants that have arrived since May.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 'Zero-click' malware comes into focus</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-10-13/-zero-click-spyware-emerges-as-a-menacing-mobile-threat">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-10-13/-zero-click-spyware-emerges-as-a-menacing-mobile-threat</a>
GIST	<p>'Zero-click' malware comes into focus</p> <p>In July 2020, an Azerbaijani journalist's iPhone silently received a command to open the Apple Music app. Without the journalist's knowledge or interaction, the app connected to a malicious server and downloaded spyware onto the phone that remained there for 17 months, eavesdropping on phone calls and text messages.</p> <p>The hack was an example of a "zero-click" attack—<a href="#">a method of placing spyware on a phone</a> without tricking a user into doing anything, such as clicking on a malicious link sent in an email or text message. It's a technique that governments have utilized to target their opponents on a greater scale and for a longer duration than previously known, according to recent research from Amnesty International and Citizen Lab.</p> <p>The Azerbaijani journalist—researchers didn't disclose the identity—was a victim of spyware manufactured by NSO Group, which <a href="#">sells technology</a> to governments and law enforcement agencies. The Israeli company says clients use its software to stop terrorism and curb violent crime. Some governments have misused NSO's spyware—known as Pegasus—to target critics in more than a dozen countries, rights groups say.</p> <p>NSO has helped governments hack phones with zero-click malware since at least July 2017 and has utilized at least six different zero-click exploits that were used to covertly hack Apple iOS versions 10</p>

through 14, according to the Amnesty and Citizen Lab research, which was presented at the Virus Bulletin conference in Prague on Sept. 28.

The zero-click attacks worked by leveraging security vulnerabilities in Apple devices, in some cases sending an iMessage that would force the phone to connect to a malicious website without user engagement, according to the research. Flaws were exploited in iMessage, the Apple podcast and music apps, Apple photos and a Wi-Fi calling feature, the researchers found. In November, Apple sued NSO Group, accusing the company of “flagrant violations of US federal and state law.”

NSO Group also designed zero-click attacks that could compromise Android phones by exploiting a flaw in WhatsApp that was used to transmit malicious code onto a device. In April 2019, WhatsApp fixed the vulnerability—saying it said had been used to target more than 1,400 people over a two-month period—and filed a lawsuit against NSO Group.

Amnesty and Citizen Lab say they uncovered evidence suggesting that NSO had been using the WhatsApp zero-click exploit as early as July 2018, nearly nine months before it was fixed, indicating that it was used to target a far greater number of people than 1,400.

“What we found is that these activities had been going on longer than we had known about,” says Donncha Ó Cearbhaill, a researcher and technologist at Amnesty International’s Security Lab.

There are indications that security researchers can disrupt the operations of NSO Group and the handful of other firms that sell zero-click hacking tools to governments. In July 2019, [a team at Google’s Project Zero](#) discovered vulnerabilities in iMessage that could be used for a zero-click hack, which was subsequently fixed by Apple. That discovery appeared to have an impact on NSO Group, temporarily disrupting its customers’ ability to infiltrate some phones.

“They were able to protect a lot of people,” said Ó Cearbhaill.

It’s an example, he added, that shows it’s possible to fight back against powerful surveillance firms.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Election workers face malicious emails</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/election-phishing-emails-arizona-pennsylvania/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/election-phishing-emails-arizona-pennsylvania/</a>
GIST	<p>County election workers in Arizona and Pennsylvania were inundated with a “surge” in malicious emails ahead of those states’ August primaries, security researchers said Wednesday, highlighting the ongoing threat facing election officials weeks before contentious midterms.</p> <p>The malicious activity, which included password theft attempts and efforts to deliver malware via poisoned links, is particularly concerning considering that county election workers are often “the least sophisticated actors in terms of cybersecurity postures, but the most critical in actual electoral engagement with voters,” researchers with cybersecurity firm <a href="#">Trellix’s Advanced Research Center said Wednesday</a>.</p> <p>Voting officials and poll workers nationwide have become much more security aware since the 2016 Russian election interference operations, but malicious activities remain a concern for all election workers who “have become targets of threats and intimidation in the physical realm,” the researchers said.</p> <p>Poll workers around the country have faced a growing number of threats ahead of the 2020 election and in the months after. Now, officials in multiple states are reporting new pressures ahead of the midterms. Some state officials have reported a deluge of records requests from “self-styled fraud investigators,” <a href="#">The New York Times reported recently</a>, while others have been offered training designed to prevent violence through de-escalation, <a href="#">CNN reported Sept. 30</a>.</p> <p>Lawmakers in California <a href="#">recently approved legislation</a> that allowed election workers to keep some personal information private as part of a program originally designed for domestic violence survivors and</p>



people who work at abortion clinics. And 15 of the 30 election offices [polled by Reuters recently reported](#) enhancing physical security protections after 2020, including installing panic buttons to hiring extra security guards.

Given the growing hostility over elections, “the damage that can come from things like phishing has been elevated since 2020 because of the extremely corrupted information environment that we’re in,” said Eddie Perez, an election administration expert and a board member at the OSET Institute, a nonprofit organization that promotes open-source election technology.

“Whether there is real technological damage from phishing or from an infiltration, it doesn’t really matter anymore,” Perez said. “Because there is such skepticism and so much disinformation that the possibilities of a perception hack have really been elevated.”

Data from Trellix shows that the number of detected malicious emails targeting Arizona county election officials more than tripled from 617 in the first quarter of 2022 to 2,246 the third quarter. The activity peaked around Arizona’s Aug. 2 primary, researchers said.

A similar trend played out in Pennsylvania. According to the company’s data, around that state’s May 17 primary, the number of malicious emails increased from 1,168 in the fourth quarter of 2021 to 4,460 in the first quarter of 2022. That’s a 382% increase. The following quarter, the number of harmful emails increased another 169%.

In one example, election workers received an email notifying them that their email password was set to expire. A malicious link would direct the recipient to either confirm their current password or create a new one, handing the credentials to the attackers, the researchers said.

In another scenario, attackers used a hijacked email thread between a county election worker and a contractor tasked with distributing and collecting absentee ballot applications. The compromised thread dated to 2018 and involved discussion of the application language and an attachment. The more recent email, sent to the unnamed elections office in February 2022, tried to get the worker to download “receipts” from a Microsoft OneDrive URL that the Trellix researchers said was “poisoned with malware capable of infecting the election employee’s system and perhaps gaining access to other systems across his organization’s networks.”

The malware variant is not identified, and the researchers said they don’t know whether the hijacked thread was the result of a breach or a “clever forgery.” This particular email was blocked through the detection of the malware, they added.

Nevertheless, the episode shows how this scenario is using established connections to get malware delivered to an election worker’s machine. [Multiple examples](#) of [thread hijacking](#) have been seen over the years, and it’s a tactic that works.

“Ultimately, this phishing scheme plays on the election worker’s professional and moral commitment to help a trusted contractor struggling to register people to vote,” the researchers said. “It relies on the election officials’ willingness to perhaps step outside an established submission process and click on the attacker’s poisonous link to access the voter applications.”

Attackers using contractor relationships to target election officials have been seen in the past, as well. In 2016, hackers later linked to the Russian government [sent an email to multiple election officials](#) posing as an elections equipment vendor sharing instructions for its various products.

On Oct. 4, the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued [a joint announcement](#) informing the public that attempted compromises of election infrastructure are “unlikely to result in large-scale disruptions or prevent voting,” and that the agencies were unaware of any cyber activity that had ever prevented “a registered voter from casting a ballot, compromised the integrity of any ballots cast, or affected the accuracy of voter registration information.”



	The agencies warned officials to be wary of emails or phone calls from unfamiliar addresses, and to exercise caution with attachments or links sent via email. Trellix researchers offered similar advice, but added that emails with urgent calls to action, such as password changes, should be on the radar as well.
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 QBot malware infects corporate users</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/qbot-malware-infects-over-800-corporate-users-new-ongoing-campaign">https://www.securityweek.com/qbot-malware-infects-over-800-corporate-users-new-ongoing-campaign</a>
GIST	<p>More than 800 corporate users have been infected in a new QBot malware distribution campaign since September 28, Kaspersky warns.</p> <p>Also known as Qakbot and Pinkslipbot, <a href="#">QBot is an information stealer</a> with backdoor and self-spreading capabilities that has been around since 2009 and which is often used as the initial infection vector in malicious attacks.</p> <p>Earlier this year, <a href="#">QBot was distributed</a> in attacks exploiting Follina, a Microsoft Support Diagnostic Tool (MSDT) vulnerability tracked as CVE-2022-30190, which leads to remote code execution.</p> <p>Since 2020, one of the main infection methods employed by QBot's operators has been the hijacking of email threads, a technique that has been used in multiple waves of attacks and which remains successful even today.</p> <p>"Qbot steals email archives from infected devices and uses the stolen emails for subsequent mailings, with the acquired information being used to lure victims into opening those emails," Kaspersky senior security researcher Victoria Vlasova explained in a conversation with <i>SecurityWeek</i>.</p> <p>Between September 28 and October 7, Kaspersky observed close to 1,800 users being infected with QBot worldwide. More than half of the new victims are corporate users, Vlasova says.</p> <p>According to the security researcher, the United States, Italy, Germany, and India are the countries targeted the most in this new campaign.</p> <p>Out of a total of 220 victims in the United States, 95 are corporate users, potentially exposing their organizations to further malicious activity, including the distribution of ransomware and other malware families.</p> <p>"Employees should be especially careful now when communicating in business correspondence so as not to accidentally open a malicious file with Qbot," Vlasova points out.</p> <p>Kaspersky could not confirm the number of potentially impacted organizations and the industries that have been affected the most in this campaign.</p> <p>"Corporate users can be either one in a particular organization or several in one and we cannot tell the exact number of impacted organizations in this case either," Vlasova noted.</p> <p>Given that Kaspersky has provided infection details based on data collected by its security products only, the total number of new QBot infections might be much higher.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Chinese cyberspies target state legislature</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/chinese-cyberspies-targeting-us-state-legislature">https://www.securityweek.com/chinese-cyberspies-targeting-us-state-legislature</a>
GIST	A China-linked cyberespionage group was recently observed targeting a state legislature in the United States, Symantec warns.

Active since at least 2010, the group is tracked as APT27, Bronze Union, Budworm, Emissary Panda, Iron Tiger, Lucky Mouse, and TG-3390 (Threat Group 3390), and has been observed targeting various entities worldwide, mainly focusing on the Middle East and Asia.

In a new report [detailing APT27's recent activities](#), Symantec notes that the attack on the US state legislature is the first time in several years that it has seen the cyberespionage group targeting a US entity.

Over the past six months, Symantec also observed the threat actor targeting a Middle Eastern government, a hospital in South East Asia, and a multinational electronics manufacturer.

As part of these attacks, APT27 was seen exploiting [Log4j vulnerabilities](#) (CVE-2021-44228 and CVE-2021-45105) in the Apache Tomcat service to deploy web shells, and using virtual private servers (VPS) as command and control (C&C) servers.

The group continues to rely on the HyperBro malware as the main backdoor, which is often executed using DLL side-loading – in some cases, a custom HyperBro loader has been used.

In recent attacks, the cyberspies abused the endpoint privilege management application CyberArk Viewfinity for side-loading the malicious payload.

“This involves the attackers placing a malicious DLL in a directory where a legitimate DLL is expected to be found. The attacker then runs the legitimate application (having installed it themselves). The legitimate application then loads and executes the payload,” Symantec explains.

Other malware and tools that APT27 has been using include the PlugX/Korplug trojan, Cobalt Strike beacon (penetration testing tool with shell code loading capabilities), LaZagne (credential dumping), IOX (proxy and port-forwarding), Fast Reverse Proxy (FRP), and Fscan (intranet scanning).

The HyperBro malware, which is a backdoor exclusive to APT27, was recently mentioned by the NSA, FBI and CISA in an alert describing the TTPs used by APTs in [attacks targeting a US defense industrial base organization](#).

“While there were frequent reports of Budworm targeting U.S. organizations six to eight years ago, in more recent years the group’s activity appears to have been largely focused on Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. [...] A resumption of attacks against U.S.-based targets could signal a change in focus for the group,” Symantec concludes.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 FormBook tops most-wanted malware list</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/formbook-most-wanted-malware/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/formbook-most-wanted-malware/</a>
GIST	<p>FormBook is the most prevalent malware in the wild worldwide, and Vidar, an infostealer, has entered the top 10 list in eighth place for the first time following a <a href="#">fake Zoom campaign</a>.</p> <p>The new data comes from Check Point Research (CPR), which shared with <i>Infosecurity</i> its <i>September 2022's Most Wanted Malware</i> report earlier today.</p> <p>According to the new figures, <a href="#">XMRig</a>, an open-source CPU software used to mine Monero cryptocurrency, is currently in second place, while the advanced <a href="#">AgentTesla</a> RAT is third.</p> <p>"In terms of the most prevalent malware in September, it's interesting to see Vidar leap into the top 10 after a long absence," explained Maya Horowitz, VP of research at Check Point.</p> <p>"Users of Zoom need to stay alert to fraudulent links as this is how the Vidar malware has been distributed lately. Always keep an eye out for inconsistencies or misspelled words in URLs. If it looks suspicious, it probably is."</p>

	<p>In terms of most commonly exploited vulnerabilities, CPR <a href="#">said</a> the 'Web Server Exposed Git Repository Information Disclosure' was at the top of the list, with 43% of organizations worldwide impacted by it.</p> <p>'Apache Log4j Remote Code Execution' followed closely, dropping from first place to second compared to <a href="#">last month</a>, with an impact of 42%. September saw the education/research sector remain in first place as the most attacked industry globally.</p> <p>From a geographical standpoint, the latest CPR report showcases a significant change in many Eastern European countries' 'threat rank.'</p> <p>More specifically, in September, Ukraine jumped 26 places, Poland and Russia moved up 18 slots each and Lithuania and Romania moved up 17. All these countries are now among the top 25, having witnessed the most extensive degradation in their ranking occurring in the past month.</p> <p>"As the war on the ground continues, so too does the war in cyberspace," Horowitz said. "It's likely no coincidence that the threat ranks of many Eastern European countries have increased this last month. All organizations are at risk and must shift to a prevent-first cybersecurity strategy before it's too late."</p> <p>The CPR report comes days after <a href="#">Microsoft published new data</a> suggesting Russia accounted for most state-sponsored attacks over the past year.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Cybersecurity threats to health services</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/cybersecurity-threats-health-services-concern/">https://www.hackread.com/cybersecurity-threats-health-services-concern/</a>
GIST	<p>Hospitals and medical facilities are <a href="#">lucrative targets for hackers</a>. It's not enough anymore to keep software updated and make backups once a week. Instead, hospitals should ask questions like: "what is a VPN" and "what does a VPN do" to kick-start their journey to safer patient data.</p> <p>Would you enjoy hearing about your most intimate medical issues on the evening news? It's <a href="#">already happening</a>. It will <a href="#">keep happening</a> until hospitals, and medical service providers stop underestimating the cybersecurity threat landscape.</p> <p>The <a href="#">statistics</a> and news headlines are clear: hospitals and medical facilities are choice targets for hackers. Patients are starting to demand that medical services providers do everything they can to keep personal data safe.</p> <p>Hospitals should be googling questions like "<a href="#">VPN meaning</a>" and "what does a VPN do" to kick start their journey to safer patient data and privacy.</p> <p><b>Why do hackers target hospitals?</b></p> <p>The healthcare industry is highly vulnerable at five pressure points. Hackers know this. They design their attacks to push these buttons to get rapid economic rewards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A shutdown of medical appliances could kill patients and delay urgent medical Treatment.</li> <li>2. The loss of patient medical history could delay the treatment of medical Conditions.</li> <li>3. Public backlash and loss of patients' trust.</li> <li>4. The possibility of facing federal and criminal investigations and fines or sanctions. Some medical providers are not equipped to install better security controls, but many simply underestimate the risks.</li> <li>5. Hackers can make quick cash from selling Personal Health Information (PHI), which is worth more than 'ordinary' Personally Identifiable Information (PII). You can change your credit card or even SSN, but you can't change your medical history of illnesses, treatments, or surgeries.</li> </ol>

[According to our sources](#), Credit cards and related information sell for \$1-\$2 on the dark web, but PHI can sell for more than \$350. Hackers use these detailed medical records to falsify insurance claims, buy high-value drugs, or get medical procedures.

### **How do hackers threaten healthcare services?**

Most of the healthcare industry's cybersecurity woes start with the weakest link: phishing attacks aimed at everyday workers.

#### **Phishing**

The first step to ransomware attacks and data breaches is to gain access to an employee's login credentials. And they do this by [carrying out phishing attacks](#). Cybercriminals bombard mailboxes with unsuspecting emails that contain malicious attachments or links that can download malware or steal login credentials. They often use the hacked account of one employee to work their way up to someone in the organization that has access to the entire IT system.

#### **Data breaches**

A careless or overburdened [employee may unintentionally click on a malicious link](#) or even lose a device. In today's work-from-everywhere environment, hackers can steal user credentials if an employee logs into the hospital's system via a home or public Wi-Fi link without the protection of a virtual private network (VPN).

Once hackers gain access to a system, they can download patients' healthcare and financial information, steal proprietary research, infiltrate the company's finance system, divert funds or medical equipment and drugs, or even shut down the entire operation.

#### **Ransomware attacks**

A ransomware infection locks down your files and system and makes it completely inaccessible. The attacker then demands a ransom to unlock the files. The healthcare industry is particularly vulnerable to this type of attack because ransomware attacks can bring medical services to a complete halt. [Medical emergencies can't wait](#). The urgency of this situation sometimes forces hospitals to pay the ransom despite the FBI's advice to the contrary.

#### **DDoS Attacks**

A Distributed-Denial-of-Service attack ([DDoS attack](#)) is when hackers bombard a targeted server with fake connection requests to overwhelm and force the server offline. DDoS attacks can bring every operation in a hospital to an abrupt halt and could even put lives at risk. The criminals usually demand a ransom to stop the attack.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Triada: dangerous mobile Trojan
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/mobile/whatsapp-beware-dangerous-mobile-trojan-malicious-mod">https://www.darkreading.com/mobile/whatsapp-beware-dangerous-mobile-trojan-malicious-mod</a>
GIST	<p>Security researchers have detected a threat actor distributing a data-stealing mobile Trojan via a spoofed version of YoWhatsApp, a relatively widely used, modified version of the WhatsApp messaging application.</p> <p>Users who download the app are at risk of having their WhatsApp account details stolen and being signed up for paid subscriptions they did not want or were even aware of.</p> <p>Researchers at Kaspersky detected the threat recently and identified the Trojan as <a href="#">Triada, a malware tool that it observed last year</a> being similarly distributed via another malicious version of YoWhatsApp.</p> <p>WhatsApp mods are basically unofficial, modified versions of the social media app touting features and functionality — such as additional privacy, custom backgrounds, and bulk messaging — that the official version does not have. Since these modified social media apps are unofficial, they are not available on the</p>

official mobile app stores of Google and Apple, so users who want them must download them from unofficial sources — a practice that security experts have long warned as being especially risky. However, users often do it anyway because they see the additional functionality is worth the risk.

### **Malicious Mod Threatens Corporate Users**

In a report this week, Kaspersky said its researchers had observed the malicious WhatsApp mod being advertised in Snaptube, a legitimate mobile app that tens of thousands of people use to download videos from Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. It's a strategy that Kaspersky assessed as designed to lend credibility to the malicious mod.

"Since YoWhatsApp is being advertised in the Snaptube app used by hundreds of thousands of users around the world, many of them are not even aware that this [modification could be dangerous](#)," according to Kaspersky.

In fact, it's quite likely that Snaptube's own developers are unaware of a threat actor abusing the advertising feature in their app to hawk the malicious YoWhatsApp mod, the security vendor said.

In addition, the malicious mod is also available for download — as "WhatsApp Plus" — via an unofficial Android app store associated with Vidmate, a mobile app for downloading YouTube videos.

Organizations using WhatsApp for workplace communication should pay attention to threats like this, says Anton Kivva, security researcher at Kaspersky in comments to Dark Reading. An employee using the malicious version of YoWhatsApp could end up leaking sensitive business information or having their account used in phishing scams and for sending spam.

"In theory, judging by the technical capabilities of Triada Trojan, if attackers infect a corporate-owned mobile device, they could even penetrate the corporate network and search and steal sensitive information, including both business development secrets, as well as employees' personal data," Kivva says.

### **Potential Impact on Businesses**

Though WhatsApp is primarily a consumer-focused app, its use in business settings (along with similar encrypted messaging apps, such as Signal and Telegram) has been growing in recent years, especially with the post-COVID shift to remote and hybrid work models.

The Facebook-owned WhatsApp's release of WhatsApp Business in 2018 has also propelled a lot of its use, especially in business-to-consumer (B2C) settings. For instance, many small and midsize businesses use messaging apps to engage customers and drive brand loyalty.

"Many customers want to have human interaction when it comes to customer service, and messenger apps like this provide an easy avenue to deliver this," says Eugene Kolodenker, staff security intelligence engineer at Lookout.

In many workplaces, employees also rely on the end-to-end encryption to communicate on sensitive topics or business issues.

In all, more than [5 million organizations](#) are reported to be using the business version of the app for customer support, advertising, and other reasons. So, criminals do look to target businesses with [malware that is being distributed via the platform](#).

"Attackers often use the lure of new product features like this WhatsApp messenger mod to socially engineer users into downloading malware," Kolodenker says. "Even if only a few people download this malicious mod on their device, it can still do damage, and organizations that have bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies need to stay aware of the threat."

	<p>It's important therefore for organizations to have visibility into vulnerable app or OS versions on employee devices. "Mobile attacks can come through channels outside of your security team's control — like SMS, social media, and third-party messaging platforms like WhatsApp," Kolodenker says.</p> <p>Malicious mods always have serious consequences both for individuals and businesses, Kivva adds. "Therefore, it's crucial to be careful when downloading new apps from third-party sites," he says. "The malicious mod YoWhatsApp we discovered was advertised on the safe Snaptube app, but that didn't make it any less dangerous for users and only increased the number of potential victims."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Chip sanctions 'kneecap' China tech sector</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/us-chip-sanctions-kneecap-chinas-tech-industry/">https://www.wired.com/story/us-chip-sanctions-kneecap-chinas-tech-industry/</a>
GIST	<p><b>LAST MONTH, THE</b> Chinese ecommerce giant <a href="#">Alibaba</a> <a href="#">revealed</a> a powerful new cloud computing system designed for <a href="#">artificial intelligence</a> projects. It is used by Alibaba's cloud customers to train algorithms for tasks like chatbot dialogue and video analysis, and was built using hundreds of chips from US companies Intel and Nvidia.</p> <p>Last week, the US announced new export restrictions that will make future projects like that unlikely. The Biden administration's rules forbid companies from exporting advanced chips needed to train or run the most powerful AI algorithms to China.</p> <p>The sweeping new controls are designed to keep the country's AI industry stuck in the dark ages while the US and other Western countries advance. The restrictions also block the export of chipmaking equipment and design software, and ban the world's leading silicon fabs, including Taiwan's TSMC and South Korea's Samsung, from manufacturing advanced chips for Chinese companies.</p> <p>"The United States is saying to China, 'AI technology is the future; we and our allies are going there—and you can't come,'" says <a href="#">Gregory Allen</a>, director of the AI governance project at the Center for Strategic &amp; International Studies (CSIS), a think tank in Washington, DC.</p> <p><a href="#">Chris Miller</a>, a professor at Tufts University and author of the recent book <a href="#">Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology</a>, says the new export blockade is unlike anything seen since the Cold War. "The logic is throwing sand in the gears," Miller says.</p> <p>The US action takes advantage of a decade-long boom in <a href="#">artificial intelligence</a> in which new breakthroughs have become <a href="#">coupled to advances in computing power</a>. Pioneering new projects often involve machine learning algorithms trained on supercomputers with hundreds or thousands of graphics processing units (GPUs), chips originally designed for gaming but also ideal for running the necessary mathematical operations. That leaves China's AI ambitions heavily dependent on US silicon.</p> <p><a href="#">Baidu</a>, the leading Chinese web search provider and a key player in cloud AI services and <a href="#">autonomous driving</a>, also uses Nvidia chips extensively in its data centers. Last October the company <a href="#">announced one of the world's largest AI models</a> for generating language, built using Nvidia hardware.</p> <p><a href="#">ByteDance</a>, the Chinese company behind <a href="#">TikTok</a> and its counterpart in China, <a href="#">Douyin</a>, relies on Nvidia hardware to train its recommendation algorithms, according to its <a href="#">own software documentation</a>. Several Chinese companies, including Alibaba and Baidu, are developing silicon chips designed to compete with those from Nvidia and AMD, but these all require manufacturing from outside China that is now off-limits. Alibaba and Baidu both declined to comment on the new rules. WIRED did not receive responses to requests for comment made to ByteDance and several other Chinese chip firms.</p> <p>Big Tech companies in China—as in the US—have made large AI models increasingly central to applications including <a href="#">web search</a>, product recommendation, <a href="#">translating and parsing language</a>, <a href="#">image and video recognition</a>, and autonomous driving. The same AI advances are expected to transform military technology in the years to come, and shape how the US and China butt heads over issues like Russia's invasion of <a href="#">Ukraine</a> and Taiwan's claims to independence.</p>



“The Biden administration believes that the hype around the transformative potential of AI in military applications is real,” says Allen of CSIS. “The United States also has a pretty good understanding of which computer chips are going into Chinese military AI systems, and they are American, which is viewed as unacceptable.”

The new export restrictions contribute to the steady decline in US-China relations in recent years, despite decades of technological codependence during which Chinese manufacturing has become the bedrock of the US tech industry. In recent years, the US government has sought to take a [more active role](#) in boosting its domestic AI industry and [chip production](#) due to an increased sense of competition with China.

Shares in several Chinese tech firms, as well as Nvidia and AMD, [fell this week](#) as the scope of the restrictions sank in with investors. The Department of Commerce had [warned Nvidia and AMD last month](#) that they would have to halt exports of advanced AI chips to China, but the rules announced last week are far broader. The new export rules add to a bruising 18 months for China’s tech firms, after a [broad government crackdown](#) aimed at regulating the industry more tightly after years of freewheeling growth.

Being cut off from US chips could significantly slow Chinese AI projects. China’s leading domestic chipmaker, [Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation](#) (SMIC), produces chips that lag several generations behind those of TSMC, Samsung, and Intel.

SMIC is currently manufacturing chips in what the industry calls the 14-nanometer generation of chip making processes, a reference to how densely components can be packed onto a chip. TSMC and Samsung, meanwhile, have moved to more advanced 5-nanometer and 3-nanometer processes. SMIC recently claimed that it can produce 7-nanometer chips, albeit at low volume.

The capacity of any Chinese company to keep pace with advances in chip manufacturing is limited by its lack of access to the [extreme ultraviolet lithography machines](#) needed to make chips with components smaller than those of the 7-nanometer generation. The sole manufacturer, ASML in the Netherlands, has blocked exports to China at the request of the US government.

David Kanter, president at chip analysts Real World Insights, says that one from the 5-nanometer generation of semiconductor technology is roughly three times faster or more efficient than a 14-nanometer one because of a greater density of transistors and other design improvements.

The move will not cut China’s AI industry off overnight, however. A person at a Chinese venture capital fund that specializes in AI, who spoke anonymously because of the sensitive nature of the topic, says that some Chinese companies have been stockpiling GPU components since parts of the rule change were [disclosed in September](#). It may also be possible for companies to train AI models outside of China using equipment installed elsewhere.

The CEO of a Chinese AI startup, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said the new restrictions would slow down AI advances at Chinese companies in the long run, but predicted that they could keep up with the US in the short term by running older hardware for longer, making AI models that can do more with the same computing power, or gathering more data. “If the target is to achieve certain accuracy, the amount of data can be more helpful than computational power,” the CEO says. “For most AI tasks, training AI models does not always need huge power.”

The most important question now is how the rules are enforced, says [Douglas Fuller](#), an associate professor at Copenhagen Business School who studies China’s tech industry. “In the short term, I think this will do what it intends to do—kneecap the high performance computing efforts of China,” he says. But Fuller says China will look to other countries that have chipmaking expertise and may try to smuggle components in.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/10/12/ransomware-hackers-have-new-worst-enemy-themselves/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/10/12/ransomware-hackers-have-new-worst-enemy-themselves/</a>
GIST	<p>In a string of recent incidents, members of notorious ransomware gangs have leaked sensitive information.</p> <p>The incidents pose a major question for hacking groups: Who can you trust if you can't trust your colleagues?</p> <p>Take the case of the ransomware gang REvil in 2019. At the time, the group had hacked hundreds of <a href="#">dental offices</a> and more than a dozen <a href="#">local governments</a> in Texas. But when security researchers at cybersecurity firm McAfee (now known as Trellix) <a href="#">wrote</a> about a REvil-affiliated hacker discussing their earnings, the researchers got an anonymous email from an insider annoyed at the group's management.</p> <p>The insider ultimately shared information on the group's tactics, procedures and operations, Trellix head of threat intelligence and principal engineer <b>John Fokker</b> <a href="#">wrote</a> in a blog post last month. He said the firm shared the data with law enforcement, which was "ecstatic" and said that the information was helpful for their investigations of REvil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fokker declined to tell <b>CyberScoop's</b> AJ Vicens which law enforcement agencies they worked with. But U.S. and European police have announced raids, charges and the seizure of cryptocurrency from REvil-linked hackers, Vicens <a href="#">reported</a>.</li> <li>• The person initially asked for a financial reward, but Trellix doesn't pay cybercriminals for information, Fokker wrote. But the U.S. government last year <a href="#">offered</a> up to \$10 million for information leading to the arrests of REvil leaders.</li> </ul> <p>It's not shocking that someone willing to engage in criminal hacking activity might also be willing to turn on his compatriots if it might bring some advantage. The REvil insider is far from the only hacker who has posted or shared sensitive information on their colleagues out of apparent spite or resignation.</p> <p>Last year, an apparently upset affiliate of the Conti ransomware gang — which months earlier hacked Ireland's health-care system — <a href="#">leaked an internal training manual</a> given to the group's affiliates.</p> <p>And after the group <a href="#">quickly supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine</a>, an anonymous Twitter account leaked a trove of internal chats from within the group, giving outside observers unprecedented access into the inner workings of the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person behind that hack told <a href="#">CNN</a> that they were a Ukrainian researcher who had long had access to systems used by the group.</li> <li>• Around the same time, another Twitter account leaked internal messages from the Trickbot group, which has links to Conti. The researcher behind that leak also identified themselves as Ukrainian, the Wall Street Journal <a href="#">reported</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Apparent insiders have also shared internal tools used by the <a href="#">Lockbit</a> and <a href="#">Babuk</a> ransomware gangs.</p> <p>The leaks come amid a confluence of factors, experts say. Some of the large ransomware groups quickly made lots of money and didn't treat their affiliates or contractors well, Recorded Future senior security architect <b>Allan Liska</b> told me. Ransomware groups have also made unpopular statements about geopolitical events and face pressure from U.S. and other law enforcement agencies, Liska said.</p> <p>"You have all of these things happening all at once," Liska said. "So it can be really dangerous to be a ransomware operator."</p> <p>Ransomware gangs also don't have experienced managers, Liska said. "They're not like senior executives or seasoned operators or things like that," he said. "These are people in their 20s and 30s that are running them and clearly have no concept of how to manage a large organization like this. Everyone [thinks] it's easy to be a manager. It really isn't."</p>

Ransomware groups are also vulnerable to infiltration, Emsisoft threat analyst **Brett Callow** said. “I’d be surprised if law enforcement hadn’t infiltrated a number of groups,” he said. “I’d be equally surprised if cybersecurity researchers hadn’t.”

**Ransomware hackers can also give away key information without knowing it.** This year, prosecutors [announced charges against](#) Venezuela-based cardiologist **Moises Luis Zagala Gonzalez** for allegedly distributing ransomware tools. Prosecutors were able to confirm that he was a previously anonymous cybercriminal after discovering that the email accounts and payment services he used were linked to his real-life contact information.

In another case, researchers [found an Iranian ransomware hacker’s name](#) listed as the creator of a ransom note.

Some ransomware operators think that they’re untouchable and don’t have to take precautions to keep themselves completely anonymous, Liska said.

“Maybe there is something we can do in terms of arrests or things like that, but absolutely they can be exposed,” Liska said. “And I think that does have some value to it.”

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HEADLINE	10/12 Political operatives scrutinize digital lives
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/data-wars-political-operatives-scrutinize-american/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/oct/12/data-wars-political-operatives-scrutinize-american/</a>
GIST	<p>The Netflix shows you watch, the books you read and the food you eat are all part of a broad set of data that political operatives use to determine whether you will vote in this year’s midterm elections and give money to their candidates.</p> <p>Democratic data firm Sterling Data Co. told The Washington Times that it has developed a donor behavior algorithm capable of finding people willing to fund Democratic campaigns regardless of whether they have ever done so before.</p> <p>“I think most people don’t really understand how their data is being used, and I’m not saying that in a bad way,” said Martin Kurucz, Sterling’s CEO. “Everybody’s data is used for advertising. There’s nobody on this earth whose data isn’t out there.”</p> <p>Sterling acquires troves of data from brokers such as Experian and Acxiom and reviews hundreds of categories of online behavior by individual potential voters, including their streaming choices and preferences for fiction or nonfiction books.</p> <p>Mr. Kurucz said he started developing the algorithm while working for Gil Cisneros, a California Democrat in Congress who was struggling to raise money ahead of the 2020 election. After applying the algorithm, he said, Mr. Cisneros’ team saw a spike in dollars raised per hour their candidate spent on the phone.</p> <p>Mr. Cisneros lost the election, but the technology drew the interest of other Democratic candidates. Mr. Kurucz turned the work into a business with the help of other Democratic operatives.</p> <p>His team has worked for more than 1,000 Democratic clients this cycle, including campaigns, committees and nonprofits. Clients include John Fetterman, the Democratic Senate nominee in Pennsylvania, and Beto O’Rourke, the Democratic challenger in the Texas governor’s race.</p> <p>The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee paid Sterling’s data team \$20,000 in July, according to Federal Election Commission records.</p> <p>Democratic candidates are not singularly reliant on aligned firms like Sterling to leverage people’s data for dollars and voter turnout. Mr. O’Rourke’s team has taken advantage of Meta’s tools for Facebook and Instagram to target ads to specific Texans.</p>

During a 30-day period ending Oct. 9, the Meta Ad Library shows Mr. O'Rourke used the tools to exclude people interested in NASCAR and deer hunting from seeing his ads. Instead, he pushed the ads to those interested in the television show "Parks and Recreation," the fast-food restaurant Whataburger, consumers of soy milk and almond milk, and people interested in the category "latte," among other things.

"Democrats have a very, very bad tendency of always s---ing on ourselves, about where we're behind in terms of the campaign operations in general, and this is something we're doing right," Mr. Kurucz said. "Thanks to AI, we're connecting the right donors with the right organizations, and they're converting [donations] because of that."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, did not use detailed targeted ads during the same 30-day window, according to the Meta Ad Library.

Republicans are no slouches, however, when it comes to using data to reach voters. The Republican National Committee said it has spent more than \$350 million over multiple election cycles to invest in its data technology, and it shares its data with state parties and candidates down the ballot.

RNC spokeswoman Emma Vaughn said sharing the data free of charge with affiliates helps separate Republicans from their Democratic competition.

"Our data-driven ground game, coupled with our winning message on top issues like the economy and crime, will secure Republican victories in November," Ms. Vaughn said in a statement.

Democrats and Republicans each contend they are ahead in the data wars.

Mr. Kurucz said his team measures success based on the return on investment for candidates and campaigns, including conversion rates for fundraising pitches.

Mr. Kurucz said the midterm elections this year were "supposed to be terrible" for Democrats, but the data his side is hoovering up and crunching will position his party well for the future regardless of the outcome on Nov. 8.

"The big thing to recognize here is because of what we're doing, odds are regardless of what level of enthusiasm we have, we can keep building this very large sustainable donor base," he said. "And that is such a huge fundraising advantage, especially when the Republicans are not only so behind on this but they're actively shooting themselves in the foot with all the different things that they do."

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 GlobeImposter ransomware distribution</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://asec.ahnlab.com/en/39706/">https://asec.ahnlab.com/en/39706/</a>
GIST	<p><b>GlobeImposter Ransomware Being Distributed in Korea</b></p> <p>The ASEC analysis team has recently identified through internal monitoring that the GlobeImposter ransomware, which targets vulnerable MS-SQL servers, is being distributed.</p> <p>This GlobeImposter ransomware has also been mentioned in AhnLab TIP's quarterly statistics, specifically in the '2022 1st and 2nd Quarter Statistical Report on Malware Targeting MS-SQL,' and in the 2nd quarter, GlobeImposter took up 52.6% of ransomware targeting MS-SQL. It has been identified that the GlobeImposter ransomware is still appearing in the soon-to-be-released 3rd quarter statistics.</p> <p>Typical attacks that target database servers (MS-SQL, MySQL servers) include brute force attacks and dictionary attacks on systems where account credentials are poorly being managed. And there may be vulnerability attacks on systems that do not have vulnerability patch applied.</p>

	Administrators of MS-SQL servers should use passwords that are difficult to guess for their accounts and change them periodically to protect the database server from brute force attacks and dictionary attacks, and update to the latest patch to prevent vulnerability attacks.
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 LockBit 3.0 builder code leak: discontent?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://intel471.com/blog/lockbit-3-0-builder-code-leak-points-to-another-disgruntled-criminal-employee">https://intel471.com/blog/lockbit-3-0-builder-code-leak-points-to-another-disgruntled-criminal-employee</a>
GIST	<p>The recent Conti vs. Monti story (see Intel 471's blog: <a href="#">Conti vs. Monti: A Reinvention or Just a Simple Rebranding?</a>) highlights a simple truth about the cyber underground: we should not discount human emotions driving events in the world of cybercrime. To underscore Conti vs. Monti is likely not a one-off, consider the Lockbit 3.0 builder code leak.</p> <p><b>LockBit: one of the world's most dangerous ransomware variants</b></p> <p>LockBit is perhaps the world's most prolific ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS). As a RaaS, Lockbit is used and distributed by a plethora of criminal groups and individuals alike. It spreads using spear-phishing emails and stolen VPN and RDP credentials.</p> <p>Lockbit emerged in 2019 and was called the 'abcd' virus after the .abcd file extension it left on encrypted files. Its purveyors became known as the ABCD group. Since then, the product and group have evolved and changed names. Now known as 'LockBit', the product continues to add new features, capabilities and optimizations, driven by the market and “customer” (ransomware groups) demands.</p> <p>According to the LockBit 2.0 website - yes, they have their own website - more than 750 victims were affected in 2022 by this ransomware. Additionally, it is claimed by criminals that they have reportedly damaged at least 12,125 companies. One Brazilian-based company reported a revenue loss of \$34.8 million and an additional \$7.3 million in costs related to mitigating the impact of their Lockbit incident.</p> <p>LockBit 3.0, the newest upgrade of the ransomware variant, was first “released” in the Spring of 2022. With version 3.0 came new features, including the ability to encrypt and exfiltrate all the files on an infected device. This feature allows the attacker to hold the victim's data hostage while demanding a ransom payment.</p> <p><b>LockBit 3.0 ransomware builder code leaked by developer</b></p> <p>As with Conti, the LockBit group acts more like a tech startup than a criminal enterprise. They hire developers and testers, pay big salaries and bonuses, recognize star employees, etc. Earlier this year, they even announced a bug bounty program. Reportedly they paid \$50,000 in reward money to a bug hunter who found an issue with its encryption software.</p> <p>On September 21, 2022, an unhappy Lockbit developer released the builder code for LockBit 3.0 to GitHub! This code allows anyone to build a fully functional encryptor and decryptor that threat actors can use for their own personal agendas, such as using the LockBit source code as foundation to build other ransomware programs. There is much speculation about who the leaker is and why they leaked the code. But apparently, the developer had a falling out with the LockBit group. The world found out about the leak via Twitter.</p> <p><b>Will LockBit go the way of Conti?</b></p> <p>Like the Whack-a-Mole game, RaaS groups surface, inflict attacks, then go quiet, only to resurface in the future. Criminal organizational instability and internal politics account for some of this churn, but law enforcement activities also contribute. Typically, however, when an active group goes dark, they rebrand, evolve, and prepare to strike more targets.</p> <p>When the Conti files leaked earlier this year, researchers began sifting through that massive heist leaving the Conti group highly exposed. The U.S. State Department offered increased bounties for information on the group. As a result, the entire Conti operation went quiet for months. Recently, however, there is some evidence that Conti may be operating again under the new moniker of ‘Monti’, or their leaked builder has facilitated another ransomware group's operations.</p>

In the case of LockBit 3.0, the builder leak represents terrible news for the LockBit group because any knowledgeable party can build the executables required to launch their own RaaS operation. As a result, second-tier criminal groups and individual actors can develop businesses and launch their own attacks based on this code. But LockBit claims, in a now-deleted tweet, that they are still in business and were not hacked, likely an attempt to save face and preserve the reputation of the ransomware group. So far, there is no sign of disbanding or going quiet, although the leak could result in fewer breaches attributed to Lockbit in the fourth quarter of 2022. Nor is there any discussion of how they intend to deal with those using the builder codes for their own nefarious ends.

The syndicate likely will need to focus attention on modifying the ransomware's code and the groups' tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), as well as implementing increased operational security (OPSEC) measures.

This story is still playing out.

### **The human X factor deflating ransomware attacks**

Given the sophistication of the LockBit 3.0 and Conti ransomware variants, it is easy to forget that people are running these criminal enterprises. And, as with legitimate organizations, it only takes one malcontent to unravel or disrupt a complex operation. The world is full of white hat researchers armed with the most up-to-date security tools and techniques. But, perhaps, we should consider human vulnerabilities as a vector worth investing in to stop cybercriminals.

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## **Terrorism, Extremism**

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Indonesia seeks to reintegrate ex-terrorists</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/13/22/indonesia-seeks-to-reintegrate-ex-terrorists">https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/13/22/indonesia-seeks-to-reintegrate-ex-terrorists</a>
GIST	<p>Ni Luh Erniati lost her husband 20 years ago in the triple bombings on the Indonesian resort island of Bali that claimed 202 lives, and it took a long time for her to come to terms with her anger.</p> <p>I Gede Badrawan, head waiter at Sari Club, was among those killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the popular night spot in Bali's busy tourist area of Kuta on Oct. 12, 2002, leaving Erniati with two children.</p> <p>The anger that filled her heart only lessened in recent years, after she realized that it would only bring her more pain and vengeance would not give her peace of mind.</p> <p>The 52-year-old was lost for words when in late September she finally met Umar Patek, the bomb maker, at Porong Prison in East Java Province. The so-called Demolition Man rushed to her, cried and kissed her feet.</p> <p>"He begged for forgiveness," she said, recalling their one-hour meeting. "I touched his hands and told him that I had already forgiven him."</p> <p>Erniati's meeting with Patek was arranged by the counterterrorism police unit Detachment 88, named after the 88 Australians killed in the blasts, as part of the government's so-called deradicalization program for convicts who were formerly terrorists.</p> <p>Detachment 88, working with the National Counterterrorism Agency, claims that the program has changed the radical thinking of hundreds of former terrorists.</p> <p>"Their mindsets have drastically changed. In particular, they regret what they did," the agency's chief, Boy Rafli Amar, told Kyodo News in a recent interview.</p>

Amar claimed that more than 90 percent of the around 900 terrorism-linked detainees had voluntarily joined the program, which provides a dialogue with experts who convince them that violence is not the way to find a solution for their grievances.

The inmates were also taught "to be more tolerant and to accept differences of religion and ethnicity," the police general said.

At the end of the program, which also includes entrepreneurship training, the participants must pledge their loyalty to the state in return for reduced sentences.

Marthinus Hukom, chief of Detachment 88, said separately that Patek was one of the success stories of the program and a "model" case for reforming other militants.

Patek and Ali Imron, another convicted Bali bomber, are set to appear in a counterterrorism campaign video to be released on YouTube this month.

Patek became eligible for conditional release in August after his prison sentence was reduced from 20 years.

His release, however, has been delayed due to opposition from survivors of the bombings and relatives of the victims. The Australian government has also objected to his release.

Hukom pointed out that one of the key tasks ahead is to prepare the ground for the public to embrace the convicted former terrorists.

"Don't let the stigma of terrorism stay on them forever," he told a group of selected journalists during an interview. "If they are isolated, they will return to their exclusive group."

He added, "We have to create room for reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators."

Both Amar and Hukom said Jemaah Islamiyah, the Southeast Asian arm of al-Qaida that was responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings, and other terrorist networks have been weakened by the arrests of many senior members.

Over the past four years, more than 1,300 arrests have been made, the police said. No organized terrorist attacks have occurred since 2018, when suicide bombers hit three churches in the East Java provincial capital of Surabaya, leaving 28 people dead.

"If you want to measure the success (of the program), I can say that in the past two years, no recidivism has been seen," Hukom said.

Amar warned, however, that threats still remain.

"The younger generation (of terrorists) is still active and reorganizing with a different style of operation," he said.

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HEADLINE	10/12 New militant organization in Bangladesh
SOURCE	<a href="https://thedi diplomat.com/2022/10/new-islamist-militant-outfit-emerges-in-bangladesh/">https://thedi diplomat.com/2022/10/new-islamist-militant-outfit-emerges-in-bangladesh/</a>
GIST	<p>On October 6, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), an elite anti-terrorism unit of the Bangladesh Police, arrested seven members of a new militant organization, <a href="#">Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya</a>.</p> <p>While members of the group have been active since 2017, it was only in 2019 that they took on the name Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya after bringing together leaders and workers of several Islamist</p>



militant groups including the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Ansar al-Islam (AAI), and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B).

Bangladesh has three streams of Islamic militant organizations. While the AAI, which came to the fore in 2013 with the killing of atheist blogger Rajib Haider, is an al-Qaida affiliated group, Neo-JMB, which was responsible for the 2016 Holey Artisan Café attack is an affiliate of the Islamic State (IS). The third stream is the JMB, which was founded in 1998 by Afghan war veterans.

Until 2017, all these organizations were functioning side-by-side, although some JMB and AAI members left to join the Neo-JMB, which gained momentum in the aftermath of IS declaring a “Global Caliphate” in June 2014.

In an article published in [The Diplomat](#) in 2020, I said that the AAI might take advantage of the leadership crisis within the JMB and the ideological frustration of IS to press forward on its agenda of creating an Islamic India.

My anticipation of the rise of AAI was based on the weakening of the other two organizations. Several JMB leaders were arrested and executed and the JMB network was dismantled by security forces. Since June 2016, Neo-JMB was subjected to a severe military crackdown, in which over 100 militants were killed, and 500 others were arrested in over 30 police-led countrywide operations. Most importantly, IS lost its ideological basis of setting up a ‘Global Caliphate’ with the [killing of its emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2017](#).

It was only the AAI, which did not lose leaders and fighters. Its ideological basis too became stronger with the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and Muslim persecution in India, as AAI/al-Qaida aim for “[Gazwatul Hind](#)” or the conquest of India.

There are several pointers to the fact that the Jama’atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya has al-Qaeda links. Its name translates to “Jama’atul Ansar in East India,” reflecting al-Qaida’s Indian subcontinental agenda. Besides, one of the seven militants arrested recently told the media that he was sent videos of Jashimuddin Rahmani, [an al-Qaida ideologue](#), who has been in jail since 2016.

In an article published in [The Diplomat in May 2022](#), I pointed out that Muslim militancy in Bangladesh has been going through a silent phase, a phase of recruitment and fundraising. The recent arrests of over 500 militants and the formation of a new militant organization indicate that militants have been recruiting robustly in Bangladesh.

The arrested militant, who [spoke to the media](#) said he was invited to join the new organization by his cousin. When he was not convinced to join it, he was sent a lot of videos of Muslim persecution across the globe, especially that of Muslims in Myanmar. It was the satiric cartoon of Prophet Muhammad by a French cartoonist that ultimately prompted him to join the militancy.

In my book, [Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Pyramid Root Cause Model](#), (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), I pointed out that online radicalization involves both online and offline elements. While the content could be online, it could be channeled through close relatives, teachers and friends.

The aforementioned arrested militant said that he was first approached by his cousin who then sent him links to videos and other online material. [His statement affirms](#) that Muslim victimization discourses have become a strong recruitment tool for militant organizations. Criticism of Prophet Muhammad also acts as a triggering factor for vulnerable Muslim youth.

So how serious is the situation in Bangladesh? I would say it is not alarming yet. But it is a concerning situation.

Youth unemployment and poor governance are of concern to many Bangladeshis. Meanwhile, the presence of global jihadist groups is growing. Bangladeshis are still resilient to the call of militant

	<p>ideology. While it would be an exaggeration to claim that Bangladesh will soon become like Talibanized Afghanistan, Bangladeshi militants have the capability to pose a security threat if they come together on a single platform.</p> <p>Some analysts see militancy as a creation of the government. Of the 50 elites I interviewed between 2018 and 2019, several did not believe the narrative of the government and the security forces on militancy issues. Since the current government lacks legitimacy, they said, it uses action against ‘militancy’ to gain credibility. Political analyst Dr. Zahed Ur Rahman recently said that the Awami League government will bring forward militant cases before elections due to be held in December 2023 and stage some ‘<a href="#">jangi natok</a>’ (militancy drama) before elections. Clearly, there is distrust between a section of the population and the security forces.</p> <p>This distrust is a serious barrier in the path of the government’s efforts to combat militancy. Whatever the perception of the people, the militant challenge is real and it deserves a comprehensive strategy to overcome it.</p> <p>Therefore, the Bangladesh government needs to reach a national consensus on the problem of religious extremism and adopt comprehensive Preventing Violent Extremism initiatives. Ad hoc PVE initiatives will meet with little success. Security forces have a major role to play to combat both online and offline radicalization.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Syria: blast near military bus kills 18</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/groups-report-bomb-blast-military-bus-syria-91429582">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/groups-report-bomb-blast-military-bus-syria-91429582</a>
GIST	<p>BEIRUT -- A bomb exploded near a Syrian military bus Thursday, killing 18 soldiers and wounding 27 others, Syrian state media reported citing a military source.</p> <p>Similar attacks over the past years have killed and wounded dozens of soldiers in government-held parts of the war-torn country. Last March, militants attacked a military bus near Palmyra in central Syria, killing 13 troops and wounding 18 others.</p> <p>Syrian authorities in the past have blamed such attacks on Islamic State group militants who have been active in southern and central Syria, despite losing territorial control in the country since 2019.</p>
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 WA 4<sup>th</sup> most political-active state midterms</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3672141/washington-ranked-4th-most-politically-active-state-ahead-midterm-elections/">https://mynorthwest.com/3672141/washington-ranked-4th-most-politically-active-state-ahead-midterm-elections/</a>
GIST	<p>Washington State ranked fourth among most politically-engaged states, <a href="#">WalletHub</a> said in a news release. Only Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia were ahead, with Oregon taking the fifth spot.</p> <p>Nebraska, South Dakota, Alabama, West Virginia, and Arkansas clocked in as the least politically-engaged states.</p> <p>As midterm elections are less than a month away, many Washington voters are starting to receive their voter guides.</p> <p>While the state ranked just outside the top 10 for the percentage of engaged voters over the age of 65, Washington fell to 23rd on the list of states with the most politically-engaged younger people — those 18 to 24 years old.</p>

The numbers are much worse for midterms. In 2018, for instance, the U.S. saw the highest turnout in decades, which was only [53.4%](#) of all eligible voters, according to Census data. Among developed nations, the U.S. ranks [30 out of 35](#) when it comes to voter turnout, according to Pew Research.

Researchers considered 10 factors when [creating the rankings](#), including percentages of registered and actual voters in the 2018 midterms and 2020 general elections, and the change in voter turnout in 2020 compared to 2016. They also looked at the total political contributions per adult, civic education engagement, campaign volunteer opportunities, voter access policies, and whether states had pre-registration policies for 16 and 17 year olds.

“[There are] several reasons why some states are more politically active than others. We know from quantitative work that education and income correlate highly with voter turnout,” Alison Johnston, a professor at Oregon State University, said. “So, states, where a greater proportion of people have college degrees and higher incomes (i.e., Massachusetts, Minnesota, etc.), will tend to have higher voter turnout rates. The ease of voting also helps. States where voting by mail is possible and where someone can register to vote close to election time will have fewer barriers in the way for people to vote, which should cause turnout rates to rise.”

On Oct. 21, Washington state will mail out voter ballots to registered voters, with the USPS suggesting you turn your ballot in by Nov. 1 so it can be arrive on time for the election Nov. 8.

For a Washington state voter’s guide for election tools, deadlines, dates, rules, and links, use this [website](#). If you’re not registered to vote yet, you can register before Oct. 31 [online](#), or in person up until election day.

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HEADLINE	10/12 Report: staggering decline in wildlife
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/climate/living-planet-index-wildlife-declines.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/climate/living-planet-index-wildlife-declines.html</a>
GIST	<p>It’s clear that wildlife is suffering mightily on our planet, but scientists don’t know exactly how much. A comprehensive figure is exceedingly hard to determine. Counting wild animals — on land and at sea, from gnats to whales — is no small feat. Most countries lack national monitoring systems.</p> <p>One of the most ambitious efforts to fill this void is published every two years. Known as the <a href="#">Living Planet Index</a>, it’s a collaboration between two major conservation organizations, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Zoological Society of London. But the report has repeatedly resulted in inaccurate headlines when journalists misinterpreted or overstated its results.</p> <p>The assessment’s latest number, issued Wednesday by 89 authors from around the world, is its most alarming yet: From 1970 to 2018, monitored populations of vertebrates declined an average of 69 percent. That’s more than two-thirds in only 48 years. It’s a staggering figure with serious implications, especially as nations prepare to meet in Montreal this December in an effort to agree on a new global plan to protect biodiversity. But does it mean what you think?</p> <p><b>What the data does, and doesn’t, mean</b></p> <p>Remember that this number is only about vertebrates: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Absent are creatures without spines, even though they make up the vast majority of animal species (scientists have even less data on them).</p> <p>So, have wild vertebrates plummeted by 69 percent since 1970?</p> <p>No.</p> <p>The study tracks selected populations of 5,320 species, vacuuming up all the relevant published research that exists, adding more each year as new data permits. It includes, for example, a population of whale sharks in the Gulf of Mexico counted from small planes flying low over the water, and birds tallied by the</p>

number of nests on cliffs. Depending on the species, tools like camera traps and evidence like trail droppings help scientists estimate the population in a certain place.

This year's update includes almost 32,000 such populations.

There's a temptation to think that an average 69 percent decline in these populations means that's the share of monitored wildlife that was wiped out. But that's not true. An addendum to the report provides an example of why.

Imagine, the authors wrote, we start with three populations: birds, bears and sharks. The birds decline to 5 from 25, a drop of 80 percent. The bears fall to 45 animals from 50, or 10 percent. And the sharks decrease to 8 from 20, or 60 percent.

That gives us an average decline of 50 percent. But the total number of animals fell to 92 from 150, a drop of about 39 percent.

The index is designed that way because it seeks to understand how populations are changing over time. It doesn't measure how many individuals are present.

"The Living Planet Index is really a contemporary view on the health of the populations that underpin the functioning of nature across the planet," said Rebecca Shaw, chief scientist at WWF and an author of the report.

Another important factor is the way monitored populations end up in the index. They don't represent a broad, randomized sampling. Rather, they reflect the data that's available. So there is quite likely bias in which species are tracked.

One controversy has been whether a small number of populations in drastic decline call into question the overall results. Two years ago, a study in *Nature* found that just 3 percent of populations were driving a drastic decline. When those were removed, the global trend switched to an increase.

The paper sparked a flurry of responses in *Nature* as well as additional explanation and stress testing for this year's update. On the bright side, the authors note that about half of the populations in the Living Planet Index are stable or increasing. However, when they tried excluding populations with the most drastic changes in both directions, down and up, the average descent remained steep.

"Even after we removed 10 percent of the complete data set, we still see declines of about 65 percent," said Robin Freeman, head of the indicators and assessments unit at the Zoological Society of London and an author of the report.

### **So, is it still bad?**

Yes. Some scientists think the report actually underestimates the global biodiversity crisis, in part because devastating [declines in amphibians](#) may be underrepresented in the data.

And, over time, the trend is not turning around.

"Year after year we are not able to start improving the situation, despite major policies," said Henrique M. Pereira, a professor of conservation biology at the German Center for Integrative Biodiversity Research who was not involved in this year's report. "At most we have been able to kind of slow down the declines."

Latin America and the Caribbean saw the worst regional drop, down 94 percent from 1970. The pattern was most pronounced in freshwater fish, reptiles and amphibians. Africa was next at 66 percent; Asia and the Pacific saw 55 percent. The region defined as Europe-Central Asia saw a smaller decline, at 18 percent, as did North America, at 20 percent. Scientists emphasized that far steeper biodiversity losses in those two areas likely occurred long before 1970 and aren't reflected in this data.

	<p>Scientists know what's causing biodiversity loss. On land, the top driver is agriculture, as people turn forests and other ecosystems into farmland for cattle or palm oil. At sea, it's fishing. There are ways to do both more sustainably.</p> <p>If climate change is not limited to 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably 1.5 degrees, its consequences are expected to become the leading cause of biodiversity loss in coming decades, the report said.</p> <p>In December, the nations of the world will gather to try to reach a new agreement to safeguard the planet's biodiversity. The last one <a href="#">mostly failed to meet its targets</a>. The Living Planet report offers evidence for how to succeed this time, Dr. Shaw said. A critical lesson is that conservation doesn't work without the support of local communities.</p> <p>"When we get really focused conservation efforts that incorporate the community, that have the communities stewarding the outcomes because they benefit from it, we see that it is possible to have increases in populations," she said. "Which is really the bright spot."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Oregon door-to-door looking for voter fraud</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/officials-people-going-door-to-door-looking-for-voter-fraud/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/officials-people-going-door-to-door-looking-for-voter-fraud/</a>
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Voters in at least four Oregon counties — Douglas, Klamath, Lane and Columbia — have complained to local election officials about people knocking on their doors, questioning residents and looking for evidence of 2020 voter fraud.</p> <p>Klamath County Clerk Rochelle Long issued a statement last month after residents called her office asking if the group was from the elections office, KGW reported.</p> <p>"I wanted to make it clear they were not from our office," Long said. "We don't go door to door. We don't ask you how you voted."</p> <p>Long warned that people may seem official and identify as from an integrity group. Long couldn't point to any one person or group responsible for the effort.</p> <p>Election officials across the country have received similar complaints about people going door to door hunting for proof the 2020 election was fraudulent. While former President Donald Trump continues to argue the election was stolen, a mountain of evidence shows otherwise.</p> <p>Election officials across the country have received similar door-to-door complaints.</p> <p>"What these folks are doing is simply out trying to gather data in an unofficial way and then unfortunately we're seeing people misusing that data to try and spread the big lie," Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan said. "The election in 2020 was safe and secure in all 50 states."</p> <p>Oregon's election officials have launched their own campaign ahead of the November election with public service announcements emphasizing that elections are secure.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>10/12 Scientists grow human brain cells in rats</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/scientists-grow-human-brain-cells-rats-study-diseases-91386402">https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/scientists-grow-human-brain-cells-rats-study-diseases-91386402</a>
GIST	Scientists have transplanted human brain cells into the brains of baby rats, where the cells grew and formed connections.

It's part of an effort to better study human brain development and diseases affecting this most complex of organs, which makes us who we are but has long been shrouded in mystery.

“Many disorders such as autism and schizophrenia are likely uniquely human” but “the human brain certainly has not been very accessible,” said said Dr. Sergiu Pasca, senior author of a study describing the work, published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

Approaches that don't involve taking tissue out of the human brain are “promising avenues in trying to tackle these conditions.”

The research builds upon the team's previous work creating brain “organoids,” tiny structures resembling human organs that have also been made to represent others such as livers, kidneys, prostates, or key parts of them.

To make the brain organoids, Stanford University scientists transformed human skin cells into stem cells and then coaxed them to become several types of brain cells. Those cells then multiplied to form organoids resembling the cerebral cortex, the human brain's outermost layer, which plays a key role in things like memory, thinking, learning, reasoning and emotions.

Scientists transplanted those organoids into rat pups 2 to 3 days old, a stage when brain connections are still forming. The organoids grew so that they eventually occupied a third of the hemisphere of the rat's brain where they were implanted. Neurons from the organoids formed working connections with circuits in the brain.

Human neurons have been transplanted in rodents before, but generally in adult animals, usually mice. Pasca, a psychiatry professor at the Stanford School of Medicine, said this is the first time these organoids have been placed into early rat brains, creating “the most advanced human brain circuitry ever built from human skin cells and a demonstration that implanted human neurons can influence an animal's behavior.”

To examine a practical use of this approach, scientists transplanted organoids into both sides of a rat's brain: one generated from a healthy person's cells and another from the cells of a person with Timothy syndrome, a rare genetic condition associated with heart problems and autism spectrum disorder.

Five to six months later, they saw effects of the disease related to the activity of the neurons. There were differences in the two sides' electrical activity, and the neurons from the person with Timothy syndrome were much smaller and didn't sprout as many extensions that pick up input from nearby neurons.

Researchers, whose study was funded partly by the National Institutes of Health, said they could do the same sorts of experiments using organoids made from the cells of people with disorders such as autism or schizophrenia — and potentially learn new things about how these conditions affect the brain, too.

Dr. Flora Vaccarino of Yale University — who previously grew lumps containing cerebral cortex that were made with DNA from people with autism — said the study moves the field forward.

“It's extremely impressive what they do here in terms of what these cells can actually show us in terms of their advanced development ... in the rat,” said Vaccarino, who wasn't involved with the study.

Such experiments in animals raise ethical concerns. For example, Pasca said he and his team are cognizant of the rats' well-being and whether they still behave normally with the organoids inside them, which he says they do. Still, Pasca does not believe this should be tried in primates. Ethicists also wonder about the possibility of brain organoids in the future attaining something like human consciousness, which experts say is extremely unlikely now.

Some scientists are studying human brain organoids outside of animals. For example, researchers at ETH Zurich in Switzerland published a study in Nature earlier this month describing how they are growing



	<p>brain-like tissue from stem cells in the lab and then mapping the cell types in various brain regions and genes regulating their development. Some are using these structures to study autism.</p> <p>Pasca said brain organoids could also be used to test new treatments for neuropsychiatric disorders, the largest cause of disability worldwide. Such research, he said, should help scientists make strides that have been extremely difficult until now because it's so hard to get at the human brain – which is “the reason why we're so much more behind in psychiatry compared to any other branch of medicine in terms of therapeutics.”</p>
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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	10/12 Texas family of five sentenced Capitol riot
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/12/politics/munn-family-sentencing-capitol-january-6/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/12/politics/munn-family-sentencing-capitol-january-6/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>A Texas family of five was sentenced together on Wednesday for storming the Capitol on <a href="#">January 6</a>, with the two parents getting jail time and three adult children given probation and some home confinement.</p> <p>The Munn family from Borger, Texas, was among some of the first to enter the Capitol on January 6, climbing through a broken window and making their way through the crypt and the visitor center before entering a Senate conference room, according to their sentencing memos.</p> <p>Parents Dawn and Thomas Munn were reprimanded by DC Chief Judge Beryl Howell for bringing four of their eight children – three adults and one minor child – to Washington with the intent to investigate the results of the 2020 election.</p> <p>Before being sentenced, Dawn Munn said she was in Washington in order to get answers about whether the 2020 election was secure.</p> <p>“I was looking for somebody to show me proof that our election was going to be secure,” Dawn Munn said. “If we don’t have a secure election, we don’t have a country. This is a country by the voice of the people.”</p> <p>Howell said that didn’t justify violence.</p> <p>“There is no question that can justify disrupting the democratic process,” Howell said.</p> <p>In explaining his reason for traveling to DC, Thomas Munn told the judge he had never been political before but “I just kept watching what was happening on the news, and I felt we should speak out.”</p> <p>Dawn and Thomas Munn were sentenced to 14 days behind bars. Their adult children, Kayli, Joshua and Kristi, were sentenced to probation and some home confinement.</p> <p>Before the <a href="#">Capitol attack</a>, Thomas Munn had encouraged others to travel to DC for January 6 through social media posts and, in the wake of the riot, several of the Munns posted on social media that they were at the Capitol that day.</p> <p>“These were fighting words that only contributed to the misinformation about January 6,” Howell said of some of their posts.</p> <p>Kristi Munn, the oldest of the eight Munn children, received 90 days of home detention in addition to probation. Howell said that Kristi, as a mother of three, possessed the judgment to realize that she was engaging in criminal activity and could have made her own decision not to enter the Capitol.</p>

	<p>“I wish I had slowed down,” Kristi Munn said when addressing the court Wednesday. “I very much want to give a better example for my siblings.”</p> <p>Joshua Munn had an unnamed physical ailment as a child that left him temporarily paralyzed for an unspecified amount of time. He has been physically disabled since and this was highlighted by Howell, who went on to task Dawn Munn for being a nurse and a mother and still “forcing” her son to march on the Capitol.</p> <p>Howell emphasized that it was the parent’s responsibility to set a better example for their children.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/12 Second bomb threat Anacortes high school</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3671881/second-bomb-threat-this-week-at-anacortes-hs-delays-classes/">https://mynorthwest.com/3671881/second-bomb-threat-this-week-at-anacortes-hs-delays-classes/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>The Anacortes Police Department, Anacortes School District, and Washington State Patrol announced Wednesday morning that classes would be delayed at Anacortes High School after a bomb threat was left on the school’s voicemail.</p> <p>Officials delayed school by two hours as law enforcement worked to make sure the campus is safe.</p> <p>This is the second bomb threat at the high school after a threat was made on Monday night, causing police to have a search before classes Tuesday, which were kept on schedule.</p> <p>Officials have reviewed security camera footage and have found no suspicious activity.</p> <p>District officials say they will keep staff, students, and families updated throughout the day.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/12 Arrests: 2 from Orting for Capitol riot roles</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article267231837.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article267231837.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Two men from Orting were arrested in Tacoma on Wednesday in connection to an FBI investigation of their alleged roles in the Jan. 2021 Capitol riot, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia.</p> <p>Among the allegations, federal prosecutors say video footage captures Richard Slaughter, 40, attacking Capitol police with a pole, and his 20-year-old stepson Caden Paul Gottfried joining a mob that pushed against a line of officers, according to a news release. The men face both felony and misdemeanor charges, including assaulting, resisting or impeding law enforcement officers.</p> <p>Slaughter, also an Orting School Board member, and Gottfried initially caught the attention of the FBI following an incident on a Jan. 7 flight from Washington, D.C. to Seattle involving mask non-compliance and protesting the 2020 election results, according to court papers shared in a news release.</p> <p>Slaughter admitted to being at the Capitol during a Feb. 2021 FBI interview but denied committing any crimes, according to court papers.</p> <p>A confidential informant identified Slaughter in videos of the attack in April 2021 and shared links to Slaughter’s wife’s Facebook page with images of her husband at the Capitol on Jan. 6, according to court papers. Cell phone data also placed both men at the Capitol that day.</p> <p>“This is the last resort, it was statistically impossible to lose this election, and there is just, um, nauseating amounts of fraud, and it’s not being heard or seen, and we really have nothing,” Slaughter said on video at the Capitol, according to court papers. “We don’t leave. We stay united. And we take back our country.”</p>

The incidents at the Capitol occurred after Slaughter and Gottfried entered the Capitol grounds and made their way to a tunnel leading to the Capitol Building with other alleged rioters, according to a news release.

Around 3:30 p.m., Slaughter reportedly kept a police shield away from officers and told law enforcement to “stand down,” according to court papers.

At about 4 p.m., both men were at the front of the tunnel, according to court papers. That’s where Slaughter allegedly wielded a long pole and Gottfried pushed his back against officers with the crowd.

Police pulled Gottfried into the tunnel and detained him before eventually releasing him, according to court papers.

Video also showed Slaughter handing what appeared to be chemical spray to someone in the crowd, according to court papers.

Slaughter and Gottfried were expected to make initial appearances in the Western District of Washington on Wednesday, according to a news release.

Prosecutors filed charges in federal court in Washington D.C. on Sept. 30 but those records were sealed Wednesday.

Police have arrested more than 880 people from nearly every state in connection the Capitol attack, according to a news release. More than 270 of them have been charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement.

A state court database does not show a prior felony record for Slaughter or Gottfried.

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HEADLINE	<b>10/13 Largest fentanyl seizure NYC history</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/13/us/nyc-fentanyl-seizure-largest/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/13/us/nyc-fentanyl-seizure-largest/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>Days after federal officials announced the <a href="#">largest fentanyl seizure</a> in New York City history, an even greater quantity of the highly addictive substance has been found, authorities say.</p> <p>Two people have been arrested and charged with multiple drug and firearm charges in connection to the seizure on October 7 at a Bronx apartment building, prosecutors said in a news release.</p> <p>Authorities found roughly 300,000 <a href="#">rainbow-colored fentanyl pills</a> inside two closets in the apartment, and more than 22 pounds of the drug in powdered form were wrapped in clear plastic packaging in multiple rooms, according to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York. The total sum of the drugs is worth about \$9 million in street value, officials said.</p> <p>The historic seizure saved lives, according to DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino.</p> <p>“Hundreds of thousands of lethal pills were lying in wait in a Bronx apartment to be unleashed onto our streets. In today’s world, the potential to overdose is dangerously high,” Tarentino said. “There is no quality control in these fake pills and it only takes two milligrams of fentanyl to be lethal.”</p> <p>The seizure comes after federal officials <a href="#">announced last week</a> that a woman has been charged with concealing about 15,000 rainbow-colored fentanyl pills in a Lego box as part of a drug trafficking scheme in September. That seizure at the time was also deemed the largest of fentanyl in New York City’s history.</p> <p>Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that’s highly addictive. It can be up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine, the <a href="#">US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control</a> said.</p>

	<p>Rainbow fentanyl comes in bright colors and can be used in pill form or powder.</p> <p>“Rainbow fentanyl is the latest threat we face in our fight against the opioid epidemic that sadly continues to ravage our communities – a multi-colored poison specifically designed to attract younger users,” Nassau County District Attorney Anne T. Donnelly said.</p> <p>And as Halloween nears, officials have been warning families to be <a href="#">especially vigilant</a> regarding their children’s candy before they consume it.</p> <p>The dangerous drug has been a major driver of <a href="#">fatal and nonfatal overdoses</a> in the US as well as the opioid epidemic.</p> <p>Although there has been a slight decrease in recent months in drug overdose deaths, the numbers remain high. About 108,000 people died of a drug overdose in the 12-month period ending May 2022 – which is down from the record high of more than 110,000 deaths reported in the 12-month period that ended March 2022, CDC provisional data published Wednesday shows.</p> <p>The latest overdose death figure remains 32% than it was two years earlier and higher than any other period before November 2021, according to the CDC data. Synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, were involved in more than two-thirds of deaths in the 12-month period ending May 2022, and psychostimulants were involved in nearly a third.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/13 Connecticut: 3 officers shot, 2 killed</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/2-officers-shot-killed-connecticut-another-seriously-injured">https://www.foxnews.com/us/2-officers-shot-killed-connecticut-another-seriously-injured</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Two police officers were fatally shot and another was seriously wounded in an officer-involved shooting in Bristol on Thursday.</p> <p>"3 officers were shot in Bristol [officer-involved shooting]. We are still working diligently to gather accurate information from our investigators and all that are involved. We will provide a press conference as soon as we can. Again, please be patient as the scene is still very active and fluid," state police wrote in an earlier statement.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/12 FBI warns about election-related crimes</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/election-related-crimes-fbi-warning-midterm-elections/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/election-related-crimes-fbi-warning-midterm-elections/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>The FBI is warning voters against <a href="#">election-related crimes</a>, a standard warning before all major elections but one that warrants increased vigilance this year amid threats to local election workers.</p> <p>Specifically, the FBI is warning voters against ballot and voter fraud, campaign finance violations and civil rights violations such as voter suppression and voter intimidation.</p> <p>"Free and fair democratic elections are one of the founding pillars of the United States," the FBI said in its 2022 November midterm elections warning. "The FBI is committed to protecting every eligible citizen's right to vote. Consistent with past practice, the FBI is providing this information to educate voters about federal election crimes and how to avoid them, and to encourage voters to report suspected violations to your local FBI field office."</p> <p>Examples of federal election crimes include giving false information when registering to vote, voting more than once, buying votes, changing ballot markings, intentionally lying about the time or place of an election to prevent people from voting, and threatening voters with physical or financial harm, the FBI noted. The FBI also warned voters about fraudulent political action committees that reroute funds for personal gain.</p>

	<p>The FBI encouraged voters to know when, where and how they will vote; seek out trustworthy information; report suspected election-related crimes; and do research before making political donations.</p> <p>Meanwhile, seven states <a href="#">continue to see unusual levels of threats to election workers</a>, senior FBI officials said in a briefing earlier this month. Since June 2021, the FBI has received more than 1,000 tips concerning threats to election workers, according to the agency. Roughly 11% of those tips have led to FBI investigations.</p> <p>Those states are Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Nevada and Wisconsin — all states where the 2020 election results were questioned, officials noted. President Biden won each of those states. FBI officials are discussing how to deal with these threats as state officials in 8,800 election districts prepare for the <a href="#">midterm elections</a> next month.</p> <p>Last week, <a href="#">an Iowa man was arrested</a> for allegedly threatening to "lynch" and "hang" a Maricopa County, Arizona, election official nearly a year after the 2020 election, <a href="#">the Justice Department announced</a>. Mark Rissi was arrested Thursday for allegedly leaving voicemails for the unnamed election official, in which Rissi allegedly threatened the official with lynching, hanging, and torches, according to the indictment filed against him.</p>
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HEADLINE	10/12 Georgia arrest: man admits killing 5 in SC
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/man-arrested-georgia-confesses-murdering-south-carolina-meth/story?id=91373084">https://abcnews.go.com/US/man-arrested-georgia-confesses-murdering-south-carolina-meth/story?id=91373084</a>
GIST	<p>A man arrested in Georgia has confessed to <a href="#">murdering</a> five people in South Carolina, authorities announced Tuesday.</p> <p>James Douglas Drayton, 24, was taken into custody in Georgia's Burke County on Monday morning, after he allegedly committed an armed robbery and fled the scene in a stolen vehicle that authorities said was registered to a family member of one of the victims in South Carolina's Spartanburg County, about 145 miles away.</p> <p>"He confessed to the crime," Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright said during a press conference on Tuesday. "He basically said he'd been hearing voices. Not sure what that means for him, but he knew he'd been using meth and had been up for like four days. Hadn't slept in four days, probably not thinking."</p> <p>The <a href="#">murders</a> took place over the weekend in the town of Inman at a home that Wright described as a "safe haven" for drug use. Deputies from the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office responded to a death call at the residence on Bobo Drive on Sunday evening. Upon arrival, deputies discovered four people who had been shot to death -- identified as Thomas Ellis Anderson, 37, Adam Daniel Morley, 32, Mark Allen Hewitt, 59, and Roman Christean Megael Rocha, 19.</p> <p>A fifth victim was found still showing signs of life and was transported to Spartanburg Medical Center, where they died. Their identity was not released because their family has not yet been notified, according to the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office.</p> <p>"This is the largest single murder we've had in Spartanburg County," Wright told reporters.</p> <p>Wright said all five victims were drug users and were known to Drayton, who investigators believe had been staying at the home for about two weeks. The victims were also living there at the time of the incident and investigators located belongings with Drayton's name, according to the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office.</p> <p>"Wouldn't have mattered to me if they were church members and never did any of that stuff, or they were heroin addicts. They were still somebody's son, brother, friend, dad," Wright said. "They are all a child of God -- they didn't deserve what they got."</p>

	<p>After the shootings, Drayton allegedly stole a car from the home, which he crashed during a brief, high-speed chase in Georgia, where he was apprehended and is now awaiting extradition to South Carolina. He will be charged with five counts of murder, Wright said.</p> <p>Drayton gave investigators a "full confession" about the murders, providing "specific information" about the crime scene, including the location of the five victims, according to the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office.</p> <p>"I don't have answers as to why. He said some things in his interviews that I'm going to hold on to because his attorney probably needs to process some of this stuff," Wright said. "It's awful."</p> <p>Burke County's online jail records did not list an attorney for Drayton.</p> <p>Although the suspect was arrested, Wright said the victims "did not get justice at all."</p> <p>"Just because we have someone in custody doesn't make things better for these families," he added. "It just means that they don't have to wonder."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>10/12 Philadelphia: 3 SWAT officers shot, injured</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/members-swat-team-shot-philadelphia/story?id=91375177">https://abcnews.go.com/US/members-swat-team-shot-philadelphia/story?id=91375177</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Three members of a Philadelphia SWAT team were shot while serving a warrant Wednesday morning, according to police, who again pleaded for an end to the city's gun violence.</p> <p>It appears all the injured officers will be OK, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said.</p> <p>This shooting occurred just after 6 a.m. as SWAT officers tried to serve a warrant on a person who was wanted for an August homicide and was suspected of participating in multiple armed robberies, Philadelphia Police First Deputy Commissioner John Stanford said at a news conference.</p> <p>As officers approached the door, the 19-year-old suspect shot at them through the door and window, Stanford said.</p> <p>The suspect tried to flee, and when the SWAT officers followed, the suspect fired at them, according to Stanford.</p> <p>SWAT officers returned fire and the suspect was pronounced dead at 7:32 a.m., he said.</p> <p>Two of the injured officers are expected to be released from the hospital later on Wednesday, Stanford said. One officer was struck in the leg, one in the hip and the third was hit in the upper chest, Stanford said.</p> <p>"It's good to see them sitting up, talking, and their families around them," Kenney told reporters.</p> <p>Stanford called the level of gun violence in Philadelphia "ridiculous," adding, "it's enough."</p> <p>"There's not a day that goes by that we don't either have a child that is shot, or multiple people shot, because there are too many people out here carrying guns and they don't have consequences," he said. "Some people need to be in jail."</p> <p>"This should not be happening -- this is not normal," he said. "Unfortunately we have come to believe that this is the normal course of events -- it's not ... it is troubling."</p> <p>Stanford stressed that Wednesday's suspected gunman was just 19 years old.</p>



	<p>"Something has been broken in this young man's life for a long time, and it just didn't start today," he said.</p> <p>Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw added in a statement: "We are tired of having to send our officers into harm's way to serve warrants on suspects who have no business being on the street in the first place. No -- not everyone needs to be in jail. But when we repeatedly see the extensive criminal histories of those we arrest for violent crime, the question needs to be asked as to why they were yet again back out on the street."</p> <p>"I am beyond disgusted by this violence. Our entire department is sickened by what is happening to the people that live, work, and visit our city," Outlaw continued. "Our officers will not be intimidated, and we will continue to do everything we can to make Philadelphia a safer place to live."</p>
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